Is God knowable?

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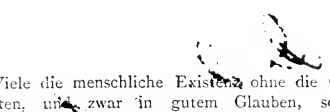
BY THE REV.

J. IVERACH, M.A.,

ABERDEEN,

Author of "The Life of Moses."



"Wenn so Viele die menschliche Existenz ohne die Gewissheit von Gott für erträglich halten, und zwar in gutem Glauben, so beruht dies nur auf Gedankenlosigkeit."—ROTHE, *Stille Stunden*, p. 43.

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I.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

IT is the question of the hour. On all sides and in all forms it is continually cropping up. A negative answer has been given to it, in the interests of orthodoxy itself, and the arguments of the orthodox professor have been borrowed by the apostle of nescience, and made to serve as the foundation of a system, in which all our knowledge and experience are only the working out of equations by symbols which themselves remain unknown. A negative answer is given in the interests of science, on the plea that the solution of the problem is impossible, and attention given to it is sheer waste of time. A negative answer is given in the interests of philosophy, because it is said that the duty of philosophy, and its only task, is to elaborate into a system the general principles which are common to all the sciences, and thus to be the science of science.

On the other hand, affirmative answers of many kinds have been given. One set of answers proceeds on the obliteration of all distinctions between God and the world, and God becomes a name synonymous with nature and with the universe. He becomes the Universal Spirit and the Universal Force, or He is hidden under some other name, which excludes from view all those personal attri-

butes which once were thought to be characteristic of Him. Another set of answers takes up the burden in all its weight. They affirm regarding God that He is spirit, personal, self-conscious, and capable of entering into personal relations with finite spirits, and that He may be known in a very true and real sense of the word Knowledge. This is the thesis we seek to maintain. We shall seek the help of all those who have made an affirmative answer so far as the answer is affirmative; we shall have to part company when they become negativists, and proceed on our journey without them. We shall gladly recognise that there is "a stream of tendency in the universe" by which all things fulfil the law of their being, which also makes for righteousness; we shall gladly recognise the great fact that thought is in the universe, and that the relations of things are relations of thought; we shall accept the fact of the immanence of the universal spirit and of the consciousness of finite spirit as elements of truth in our argument; but we shall seek to advance when these stop short, and we shall try to show that all these partial affirmations have signi ficance and can demand standing-ground only when we make a further advance, and affirm the existence and working of a free, personal, self-conscious Spirit, who can enter into most intimate fellowship with His creatures.

It is necessary at the outset to state the meaning of the terms we are to use. In the question, "Is God knowable?" there are two words which need to be defined. We shall begin with the word "knowledge." We shall not enter into the numerous problems of a metaphysical kind which, still awaiting solution, cluster round the word "knowledge;" we take for granted that knowledge is possible, although we may not be able to explain how it is possible, nor exactly to show how much of actual knowledge depends

on the knowing subject, and how much on the object known, and what is the exact proportion and relation between the two. Certain aspects of these questions will need to be discussed in the sequel; at present we assume the unquestioned fact that men actually do know. There is a body of verified knowledge lying close at hand in those formulated results of human experience which we name the sciences. In them we have a body of ascertained truth regarding which there is no question or any room for doubt. When, however, we pass beyond that defined region, and inquire into the pre-suppositions on which science is based, we enter into a region where there is room for controversy, doubt, and denial. Still further is there room for controversy when we pass into the penumbra of speculation, which stretches far and wide on every side around the firm land of science. There may be solid land, there may only be a cloud-land, only further research can tell.

There is, then, no distrust of science to be shown in these pages. 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. We find these methods quite adequate to the explanation of the laws and processes of the inorganic world, though even in that department we hear from the highest authorities the mournful complaint that they know so little of the nature of matter. The progress which has already been made, and the rapid march of discovery in the physical sciences, leave no room for doubt that in this sphere at least we have got possession of a method which is

adequate to its work. Here there need be no unexplored remainders nor any elements of uncertainty which, left out of account, might vitiate the whole procedure. The mechanical certainty which obtains in the mathematical and physical sciences has led to the desire and to the frequent attempt to regard their method as the only sure method of reasoning. Strenuous attempts have always been made, and more specially in modern times, from Descartes and Spinoza downwards, to set forth a reasoned account of the universe from the simple assumptions of matter and motion. Nor have these been without a certain measure of success. By means of them attention has been called to the universal prevalence of the laws of matter, and of their persistence in all forms of life present in the visible world. On the other hand, it is coming to be acknowledged that the assumptions which enable us to give a rational account of the inorganic world are insufficient and inadequate for the explanation of the processes of living things.

The methods of the natural sciences, while assuming the results of the physical sciences, are yet constrained to make fresh assumptions and to recognise new forces unheard of and unneeded in the simpler sciences. Even the school, which sometimes speaks as if it needed nothing more than mechanical forces, is constrained to assume a new force, which no chemist ever needed,—the force of heredity with modification. The recognition of this new law, this new force, constrains us to the modification of an old method, and compels men of science to widen their calculus and provide for the new phenomena. It is not necessary here to inquire into the merits of the hypothesis of Mr. Darwin. All that concerns us here is the fact, that the method of the natural sciences is different from that of the physical sciences. The mechanical and chemical laws of matter are

modified; their action is in the grasp of a higher law whenever they are taken up into the more complex sphere of organic life. It is idle here to speak of the law of parsimony, "the law which forbids us to assume the operation of higher causes when lower ones are found sufficient to explain the observed effects," the law which has been grandly said to constitute "the only logical barrier between science and superstition." For it is better, and certainly it is more scientific, to acknowledge frankly when we have passed from the inorganic to the organic world, that we are dealing with a new set of forces, and to widen our method correspondingly, than set ourselves to describe a wide curve, by insensible degrees to minimise the difference which stares us in the face, and by slow gradations accustom ourselves to the thought of identity between the old forces and the new. In the former case we know where we stand, in the latter we are lost in the haze of utter bewilderment. In any case we have to deal with the new forces as new, and to alter our method accordingly; and it is only self-deception in science to suppose that it is working with mechanical forces alone when it has also the forces of life to take into account.

A still further modification of method has to be made when organic life becomes intelligent, self-conscious, and purposive. No doubt here also the approach has been slow and gradual; and it is open to any one to say that the continuity is perfect, that there is no break in the chain which binds into unity the first germ and simplest form of living things and the highest form of intelligence known on earth. It is not necessary that we should deny the unity of life or the gradual evolution of intelligence. All we contend for at present is this, that when intelligence, self-consciousness, and purpose have appeared in the sphere of

science, science has to account for these, and to widen its method accordingly. If it could be shown, and every step of the process proven to demonstration, that organic life was self-developed from inorganic matter, that consciousness sprang from unconscious matter, and all the manifold phenomena of moral, intellectual, and spiritual life had their origin and history from un-moral, unintellectual, and unspiritual phenomena, all this would be nothing to the purpose in the present issue. For be the origin and history of moral and intellectual life on the earth what they may, certain it is that science must take into account their present state and influence. The present tendency to substitute history in the place of science, and to talk of the genesis and development of a thing when we desire to know the thing itself, may be only a passing phase of human thought, but it is a phase which evades the problem which lies before science and philosophy. That problem is to give an adequate explanation of personal, intellectual, and social life. In one word it may be described as the explanation of personality. Science has evaded the problem, psychology has not touched it, and philosophy seems to fall into bewilderment whenever it comes to the confines of it.

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. We are aware that here we have all the forces and tendencies of the present time against us, and all the special sciences, and more particularly the ambitious philosophies like those of Hegel and Herbert Spencer, and others which seek to explain the universe. And yet it may be that here may be matter for consideration. At all events we shall state our case.

It is curious to find that we may read almost all the treatises which have ever been written on psychology, on political economy, on the other sciences which have man for their subject, and yet not find any reason to apprehend that there is such a thing as personality in the universe. Impersonal elements we shall find in abundance, innumerable discussions about consciousness, about faith and reason, about subject and object, about knowledge absolute and relative, but hardly ever any recognition of the fact that all these are meaningless, unless they are referred to a self-conscious intelligence which is personal. It is not to be expected that a method which deals with impersonal elements alone should ever be able to reach personality. 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. Constrained to admit the existence of consciousness, it yet does not know what to make of it, and is compelled to leave it on one side, with the assertion that consciousness has no influence in the movement and succession of events, which go along by themselves. What consciousness has been to Materialism, that the fact of personality has been to most philosophies. It has been ignored, or if recognized, only recognized in a mystic phrase in passing, called the abyssmal deep of personality, and left to itself.

It would be well, however, to recognize the existence of the problem. For the methods and results already won in psychology, true to a certain extent as they are, yet need to be adapted to the circumstances of the new case and to recognize the new problem set to them for solution. The bent of all the sciences seems, however, to lead us further and further away from the position we advocate. More particularly the rise of the historical method of study and the use of the comparative method, by which resemblances, unperceived and remote before, have been brought into nearness, and raised to prominence, have cast into the shade the differences which are vital to the right understanding of the truth. It is strange that all the sciences put together cannot vindicate for us, or set forth in order and method, that knowledge which we know we have. We know men; we carry about with us each day a true conception of individual men; we can foretell how they will act in particular circumstances, and, in short, have a true knowledge of what their personality is. And yet this knowledge lies outside of and beyond all the sciences, unrecognized by them, and occasionally denounced by them as personal and subjective. Concretely we all know personality, and have no difficulty in acting on our knowledge; as the sciences at present are, we have found it impossible to construct personality from impersonal elements.

It may indeed be said that the problem is impossible of solution, and that even in practical life we have to make generalisations after the fashion of science. We have to turn men into aspects, and deal with the aspects only. A commander of an army ceases almost to think of his men as individuals, and comes to regard them as an instrument of war, to be kept in health and strength and in fitness for the work he has to do. A political economist learns to

regard man as a being who has wants to be supplied, and sets himself to ponder the problems of supply and demand. In all circumstances when we deal with men in the mass, we must be content to attenuate them into aspects. But in practical life we make allowances, for we know that our knowledge is greater than we can formulate, too minute, extensive, and subtile to be cast into rules. But neither science nor philosophy can make allowances. Their method is too absolute and their procedure too rigid for that. It would be well if this were remembered in the controversies of to-day, for half the trouble of our time has come from the negative stand which science has made. Knowledge may be outside of the method of science, ignored by it, and yet may be true and valid knowledge; and in no instance is this more manifest than in the case of personality.

Let us seek to apply the method of science to a problem in literature. Let us take, for instance, the case of Shakespeare. We take up the volumes which contain his works, we observe at the outset that they are written in the English language. They use words in meanings which are known; each of the words used has had a long history, and has come to the shape and meaning it has for Shakespeare through a lengthened evolution, conducted according to laws of language which may be ascertained. So far there is no need to postulate any personality for the works of Shakespeare. Each word he uses can be accounted for apart from any thought of him. We go a step further, and look into the meaning of his works, and the first thing that strikes us here is the fact that a great deal of the material he uses is by no means peculiar to his works. The individual characters, the historical situations, and the very plots can be found elsewhere. We can discern here also a law of growth; nor is the dramatic effect and the general

purpose and plan of action singular; they are common to him and his contemporaries. The study of the works of Shakespeare, if conducted in a method rigidly scientific will never lead us beyond the operations of general laws, philological, historical, and dramatic; and yet how inadequate a solution would that be which would seek to account for the works of Shakespeare without Shakespeare. From every page evidence of a great personality, great in thought, feeling, emotion, will, great in all the elements of personality, streams in upon us, and we know that we are in intimate personal relations with a mighty man. When we try to formulate the evidence, which would prove satisfactorily to ourselves, or convey adequately to others the existence of Shakespeare, we find that we cannot. We may point to indications which imply that here are the works of a personal intelligence, but in the long run we find that these indications are valueless apart from the concrete apprehention of personality in every mind, which apprehension neither science nor philosophy has yet shown to be reasonable or justified.

We shall return to this in other relations further on in our discussion. For the present we shall have done enough if we have shown that there is a sphere of human knowledge, plain and manifest to all who think, which yet lies beyond the methods of science and philosophy, so far as these have yet been formulated. It will be our business to show that the mode of argument which has been held to justify the conclusion of Agnosticism would warrant us in the denial of that personal intelligence which produced the works of Shakespeare. On the other hand, we shall seek to prove that arguments of the kind and cogency which constrain us to believe in the existence of Shakespeare are forthcoming to constrain us to believe in God.

As to the other word which we shall have to use frequently in our discussion, we have to say that when we speak of God, we use the word in the old sense of the term. We do not mean the universal reason, nor the unknowable, nor a stream of tendency, nor any abstract universal of any kind. Such an abstraction may indeed be reached, and be the only goal which can be reached on the method of science, which has reduced all personal things to impersonal aspects; but such an abstraction cannot satisfy the legitimate demands of intelligence, nor do justice to all the elements involved in concrete human knowledge. After science has done its work, and reached as the ultimate source of things infinite righteousness, goodness, and love, the problem of seeing how these converge and are united in a Person whose attributes they are, and through whom alone they have subsistence, remains to be solved. It may be too hard a problem for solution, more especially as the lesser problem, of how finite intelligence, righteousness, and love are qualities of a finite person, remains yet unsolved. But it will be of advantage to state the problem, and to have it recognised as a problem, and to get away for a little while from the abstractions of science and philosophy to the concrete experience of men and their actual knowledge.

II.

PERSONALITY, AND THE MANIFESTATION OF IT IN HISTORY.

IN all systems of science and philosophy, personality either remains as an unexplored enigma, or is set aside as of no significance in the total account. It is certainly a problem of exceeding complexity and difficulty, and yet one which in ordinary life receives a practical solution every day. Personality rises out of the midst of a series of necessities, and emerges from confluences of laws of all sorts, yet is set in relation to them in such a way as to find room for itself, and scope for free and understanding action. Fixed necessities are found in that sphere of inorganic nature of which physical science seeks to give an account; necessities no less fixed seem to rule in the sphere of organic life; and psychology has much to tell of ordered sequence in the sphere of intellectual, moral, and spiritual life; still with all that has been ascertained regarding these fixed sequences personality remains unaccounted for. As far as we can see, human personality is limited, conditioned, and beset on all sides by these necessities, yet it makes these limits and conditions instruments for carrying out its own purpose, and in a way as yet inexplicable makes itself the complement of them and their interpreter. Fixed and unalterable necessity becomes the condition of freedom, and unchange-

able laws the foundation on which rises somehow the structure of free, personal, conscious life.

No solution of the problem is to be found in the theory of evolution. If we can trace the steps of the process whereby intelligence has been evolved, and show how from the rudest germ of action all the phenomena of conscious life have arisen,—and this has yet to be done,—it would not help us one jot in our endeavour to understand the facts as they now exist. Of these facts the main one to be grappled with is this of personality, of which it is not too much to say that it has been the motive force of human history, and the main factor in what we call civilization. There is profound truth in what Carlyle says, "The history of what man has accomplished in the world is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked there." But there is a deeper truth underlying that expressed by Carlyle—the truth to wit that it is man who has given significance to the world, and who has in conscious reflection turned back to read the wondrous story of what has been transacted in it. All the forces of inorganic nature meet in him, all the history of organic nature is passed through by each individual, and he is able to look back over it all, and read the story which is written on the face of the world. He is able to give a somewhat satisfactory account of almost all the processes of the world, and understand many of the elements which go to form his own personality. He has named them, and can investigate their action in terms of science, so far as these are elements common to the race. The universal aspect may be spoken of universally. But a person is beyond rules, and in the long run cannot be reduced to aspects. *Solvitur ambulando*, men are wise beyond the rules of science. In all professions there is a wide field of knowledge which is won only through practica experience; and there is always a wide

difference between a knowledge of man and a knowledge of men. For a knowledge of men involves many more conditions, and a great number of additional circumstances have to be taken into account than are implied in a mere knowledge of man. This is true indeed of all knowledge. For a practical man knows that the highest calculus we have cannot solve for him the problem of a crowbar as it is in actual use. Mathematics can only solve the problem by assuming that the crowbar is rigid throughout, whereas the fact is that every particle of it is in a state of active vibration, and in its complexity presents a problem beyond the reach of mathematical analysis. If a problem of such simplicity be beyond the reach of present science, what shall we say of the problems which are of such exceeding complexity as that of human personality? We need a bolder, freer method to attack such problems than those which science has provided.

The method of literature presents a more hopeful field. In it people are not ashamed to say that there are things which are inexplicable, and are not afraid to say that the law of parsimony has it limits. Literary methods are not ashamed to recognise the mark of personality, nor to describe its laws and modes of operation. They delight to recognise differences, and to point out the special features of style, manner, and way of expression of each writer. Literary criticism has also its method, and written literature has its laws. There are fixed conditions of literary work. Words must be used in the sense they usually bear, sentences must be formed in conformity with the laws of grammar. Paragraphs must be constructed in harmony with the laws of rhetorical speech. Thoughts must follow each other in a certain order. And conclusions must be inferred in accordance with the behests of logic. When all these conditions have been observed, one

would suppose that there was little left for the exercise of freedom, and less for the manifestation of personality. And yet the wonder is, that under these conditions and out of them each person forms a style for himself, and over every true work floats the aroma of a personal presence, which criticism can recognise but cannot analyse. It is not the thought which is in the book, nor the original work there, nor even the contribution made by it to positive knowledge that makes the difficulty. All these can be classified and reduced to aspects. But the subtile thing which eludes classification is just this personal thing so easy to apprehend and so difficult to describe. In no writer is this recognition of personal force recognised so well and described so well as it is in the writings of Ruskin, which in this regard are invaluable.

We feel the presence of this personal power in every great work of art, be the material of art what it may, and yet Art is but an imperfect medium for the communication of personal force. So much of a great personality is in his work, and yet there is so much that cannot be put there. We read the orations of Demosthenes and of Cicero, and feel ourselves under the spell of these mighty masters. Great, however, as are the fascination of the printed page and the influence exerted on us through written words, it is insufficient to enable us to understand the great effects produced on those who heard them. For written words form only one channel for the communication of personal influence, while actual spoken speech, face to face with the audience, affords a thousand media for the communication of spirit with spirit. There is the manifold tones of the human voice, gestures, attitudes, the rush of emotion, the subtile revelation of a thought which language can only half express, and a number of other things which go

to form the whole impression made on the people, while there is also the reflex influence which the audience have on the speaker. Of all these the printed page can convey nothing; and frequently those who next day calmly read the words which actually were spoken, are unable to discover what moved them so deeply. Oratory is that form of art which is so personal in its nature that the whole complex outcome of it is limited and circumscribed to one time and place, and is incapable of being translated into a form which is impersonal and universal. Here is a phenomenon of which every one must admit we have real, true, and adequate knowledge, and yet it is a knowledge which transcends all the methods of science.

Let us seek to analyse the relations which subsist between the commander of an army and his soldiers. To him, indeed, they, taken in the mass, are only an instrument of war. They have to be fed, clothed, kept in vigorous health, and ready to be transported from place to place. They are so much force, which he keeps in the highest degree of efficiency, in order that they may be hurled at the proper time on the weakest parts of the defences of the enemy. On the other hand, the commander is to his soldiers a person who inspires trust, loyalty, and obedience. The soldiers of Marlborough had the most profound persuasion that he would find for them a way of escape from the most difficult and dangerous circumstances. One of Wellington's men described the feeling of the army when, on one occasion, being hard pressed and beginning to fall back, the Duke appeared in the midst of them, "There is the Duke, I would rather see his face than have the help of ten thousand men." The influence of Cæsar, of Alexander, of Napoleon over their men was quite incalculable. It is in vain that we study their tactics, their strategy, and make

a system from the methods they used or invented, we have to add to all these universal elements of their procedure that mysterious, potent charm of personality, which the law of parsimony would exclude ere we can understand the success of their work and their influence over their soldiers. If we exclude the recognition of this personal force from the number of causes which make history, or seek to reduce it to impersonal force, we at once find that the other causes apart from this one are inadequate to explain the effect. The influence of an Alexander or of a Napoleon is of a kind comparatively simple and less complex than that we find in the case of great thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, great poets like Horace, Virgil, and Dante, or great religious reformers such as Mohammed and Buddha. Here the personal force has widest reach and amplest influence.

Before we describe these, look for a moment at science itself. I wish to learn what science has to teach me. I come with the understanding that science is the universe as apprehended and understood by man. It may be that nature is greater than science, and there is in nature something grander, greater, and more subtile than man has yet known, but at present I seek to know what science has to teach me. I begin with the mathematical sciences, and proceed from the simplest element onwards to the most profound and far-reaching analysis. Nothing seems present here except definitions, axioms, and their results. I pass on to physics and chemistry, and here too I find myself in a region of impersonal forces, where all is calm and objective. I put myself under the guidance of the masters of natural science, and still there is speech only of necessity and chance, of natural selection, which, on inquiry, means only the pressure of force from behind, not the onward beckoning of personal intelligence, working to a great and

adequate end. Suppose I yield myself with all loyalty and obedience to their teaching, and try to explain the origin and growth of things by the forces postulated by Darwinism; suppose I accept the account which science gives of the universe, on reflection I find myself pressed by another question,—how am I to account for science? If the larger effect which we call nature can be accounted for by the action of impersonal forces, may science, the lesser effect, be accounted for in the same way? As a candid seeker after truth I go to find an answer. I follow the stream of history downwards; as far as possible I find that the existence of the elements of geometry implies Euclid, that the elementary problems of mechanics imply Archimedes, that other mechanical knowledge implies Galileo, that the laws of atmospheric pressure imply Pascal, that the laws which regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies imply Kepler, that the law of gravitation implies Newton, and, to finish, that quaternions imply Sir William R. Hamilton. With regard to Natural Science, I only remark that Darwinism implies Mr. Darwin. In all the other sciences I find every advance linked with the name of a man; and in seeking to know the present state of any science I have recourse to Thomson and Tait, to Clerk Maxwell, to Huxley, or to others, and everywhere it is found true that science has a personal origin. It is nothing to the purpose here to say that science so far is only a true account of what goes on in nature. I am not asking here whether science is true or not, but how did it arise, and how do we account for it, and I find the solution lying close at hand, plain, gross, and palpable; science has, I repeat, a personal origin. Not only so, but all the uses which man has made of nature, from the construction of the first rude weapon of flint up to railways, telegraphs, and other appliances, in

their origin and development, have come from persons. Both in the arts of war and in the arts of peace, science and art have to make room for the discoverers of the differential calculus, and for the inventors of the bow and the spear, and for the inventors of the printing-press and the steam-engine. Nor does science find any difficulty in making this acknowledgment. Men of science sometimes write biography, and recent accounts of Mr. Darwin, written by the most strenuous advocates of natural selection and of the method which seeks to eliminate every personal element from science, dilate on the greatness of the man, on the revolution he has wrought in our ways of thinking, and on the vast personal force which dwelt in him, apparent to all readers of his works, and manifest in a much more marked manner to those who had other ways of knowing him. The conclusion to be drawn from these accounts of Mr. Darwin is that it takes a person to produce impersonal results. But in what way the eulogists of Mr. Darwin, by the methods of science, justify their account of him, does not appear. Certainly the method which recognises only impersonal elements has been laid aside or changed by them when they pass from the writing of science and begin to speak of Mr. Darwin.

In a still more striking manner does this appear when we consider the force of personality, not in the region of pure science, but in the sphere of human history and of personal relations. It is true indeed that the rule of impersonal elements has been introduced into this region also. Recent inquiries into the phenomena of language, law, and religion tend to the recognition of what can be explained by the comparative method only. Not to enter into a field so large, we shall limit what we have to say to the subject of comparative religion. We find a remarkable

agreement among the masters of the methods of comparative mythology and comparative religion with regard to a distinction which they make between religions which are national and religions which are international. The one is limited, the other is universal. The one is supposed to be the natural outgrowth of the common spirit of the people, is a transformed mythology organically connected with the social system and national tendencies of the people who formed them; while the other is the product of person or persons, and is marked throughout by the personal qualities of the founder or founders. "The natural are necessarily national religions, as incapable of becoming universal as the language and customs of their native lands; but the instituted either are or can be made universal in aim and endeavour. The former can extend only with the nation, new converts being absorbed tribes; but the latter can be carried abroad and received by distant peoples as systems of truth, orders, and forms of worship. We may name as types of the first class Hellenism, Brahmanism, the religions of Egypt and Rome; as types of the second, Hebraism, Zoroastrism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islamism. The former run back into an immemorial past, and are at once the measure and the mirror of the people's history; but the latter run back into great personalities, whose thoughts they embody, whose purposes and being they as it were immortalise. The instituted may thus be termed historical religions, but the natural pre-historical. While these are studied in and through the collective people, there can be studied through their respective founders the history of the creative mind giving the genesis of the created faith" (Principal Fairbairn, *Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1882). We accept that part of Principal Fairbairn's statement which has reference to historical and universal religions. These

indeed are only explicable through a great personality, and cannot be rationally apprehended apart from him. But would the comparative method have recognized this great personality if history had not recorded his name, and laws, institutions, and religions were not historically shown to have their source and origin in him? The comparative method is bound to seek to disintegrate him, and reduce him to elements and qualities; and the fact that it has been constrained to recognise a great personality in order to account for the origin of historical religions is the strongest testimony we can have to the presence and the influence of personality in history. Strange and curious is it also, that the universal religions are those which are historically shown to have a personal founder. And Buddhism, Islamism, Christianity, are unintelligible apart from Buddha, Mohammed, Christ.

We have never been able to see, however, how the assumptions made by the comparative method, assumptions which underlie the distinctions made by Principal Fairbairn in his usual graphic and felicitous way, can be justified logically and historically. In the case of historical religions we use known causes in order to account for them in a rational way. But when we speak of a "common spirit in life," and use other terms of a similar sort, are we not simply using abstractions, which only express common elements, and leave out of account distinctive differences, which form the essence of the historical causes of the events we seek to explain? When we say that "natural religions run back into an immemorial past" and are "pre-historical," do we not in fact say that we are ignorant of the causes which produced the historical phenomena which we observe in the religions of Greece and Rome and others? The legitimate inference would be

that since the higher religions, the universal and historical religions, run back to a great personality,—a personality so great that history has been forced to record his acts, his sayings, and his character,—so also the pre-historic religions run back to persons, who either were not great enough to stamp their impress on history directly, or history had not then come to sufficient ripeness to have ways and means at hand adequate to record the names and personalities of those who first brought it to self-consciousness? From one cause or the other the personalities of these historical persons—supposing them to have existed—have not made an impression on history vivid enough to resist the disintegrating influences of the comparative method, and have easily become aspects or attitudes of a common spirit, or become identified with solar myths. If it is possible to do this in a reasonable way, by all means let it be done. We are not concerned to maintain that all the myths which we can recognise in history have had a personal origin. For our present purpose it is sufficient to have pointed out that the historical and universal religions cannot be explained apart from the person of the founder. The fact also that myths were *believed* by the people of Greece, of Rome, and India to have had a personal origin, explain the fact as we may, makes for our argument. For it proves that personal force was recognized by these peoples as the great practical factor in their lives. If at one time they peopled the seas and streams, woods and hills, and almost all natural objects with personal existences, that of itself shows how great an influence they recognised the personal influence to be. If, on the other hand, we have learned to recognise that the phenomenon of nature can be rationally accounted for without having recourse to such causes, it still remains true

that scientifically we have learned that apart from the mysterious force of personality we can give no rational account of history.

It must be said, however, that the distinctions drawn between national and universal religions seem insufficiently grounded. Be the other differences what they may, the difference emphasised by Principal Fairbairn, of which one alternative description is that natural religions are pre-historical, and universal religions are historical, seems to us to be quite untenable. It simply takes advantage of our ignorance, our necessary ignorance of pre-historic times, and out of a vacuum constructs a positive foundation which deludes us with a false pretence of knowledge. The more philosophical course of procedure would be to take the causes we know as operating within historic times, and assuming them to be true also of pre-historic, seek to account for mythology by means of them. But to invert the historical method, as is so often done by students like Max Müller and Principal Fairbairn, and to exclude great personalities from pre-historic times, while assuming them as necessary to account for the phenomena of history, seems to be somewhat unphilosophical. Is there any conceivable reason for this, except the fact that we do not know what may have happened in pre-historic times? How easily any remarkable story of modern times, such as that of Napoleon, may be disintegrated, and may be made to read like a solar myth, and have as much appearance of scientific plausibility as any one in any of the books of Max Müller or of Principal Fairbairn! It might also be believed to be a true and adequate account of the modern phenomenon were it not that we happen to know the facts of the case. To apply to pre-historic times a course and method which is demonstrably unfit and inadequate to the explanation of

the times we know most about, is, we repeat, unphilosophical. The probability is that in pre-historic times, as in historic, every advance coincided with the appearance of some great personality in the midst of men, and that most myths have a real personality for their substratum from which they have grown to the gigantic proportions they finally assumed. "Even if we revert to the earliest stages of development, we can see that before natural selection got anything worth selecting in the most primitive societies, the creative spirit, the superior man, had first to appear. Before primitive man could make any decided step in advance, or could separate himself conspicuously from his lower animal relations, some inventive individual had to conceive and construct the first rude flint weapon, which gave men so great advantage in the combat with wild beasts or with their fellows; some pre-historic Prometheus first stole the secret of fire from Nature, and showed to the others its uses; some one discovered the fruitful corn amongst the common grasses, and taught the rest to plant it; to some one the idea first occurred that the skin of a slain beast, if deftly transferred and arranged, would warm himself as it did its original owner. Again, and later, some one invented spoken speech; some one before Cadmus invented the use of letters; some one before Tubal Cain taught how to temper and shape the metals. But in all these and in many other cases the first seeds of fruitful thought or invention appeared in one mind; the subsequent important improvements have likewise come from one" (Graham's "Creed of Science," p. 67). The result seems to be that the triumph of the comparative method is only apparent, and arises from the fact that we know so little of pre-historic times, and consequently have so few facts for which to account. As soon as we apply it to a

time of which we know a little, it breaks down, and is utterly inapplicable to any period regarding which our information is ample and full. While we cannot be thankful enough to those distinguished scholars who have taught us the history of language and have wielded the resources of the comparative method with giant skill and strength, we must still maintain for ourselves the right of bringing their conclusions to the test of the concrete experience of men. And when tested by these we find the picture painted by the aid of the comparative method to bear as much resemblance to the real facts of history as the typical Frenchman of British imagination bears to any living Frenchman. By all means let us generalise when we can, but let us always bear in mind that our generalizations are only general, and have left out of account the very things which most need explanation. With regard to the conclusions reached by the comparative method, all we say now is that they are too absolute, and when once reached, they exert too great an influence over the minds of those who have discovered them, and are pushed with too much vehemence into spheres where they have no meaning.

We have seen that personality is the main factor in the onward progress of man. Every advance made by man within historic time is connected with the appearance of some great personality in the midst of a people. What is true of historic time is likely true also of those times of which history has no record. But to those who proceed by the method of averages, and who refuse to recognize a presiding intelligence over the universe, and of a mighty personality who is to the universe what a great human personality is to his people,—at least so much as that, whatever more he may be,—the emergence of a great man

is an enigma and a perplexity. He is an accident inexplicable and unaccounted for in their scheme of things. They fold their hands in an attitude of resignation, or fiercely call on chance to help them in their hour of need. No such perplexity awaits the Theist who believes in God and knows Him. To him there is always a reserve of personal force, and a great human personality is a gift of God to the people and to the race given in His own kingly way. It is His way thus to raise men to a higher level, and by His gifts to the race of men of science, of artists, poets, thinkers, prophets, and of great men of all kinds, He widens the borders of feeling, of thought, and of life, and brings the nations to a larger life. History may be explained on the theistic view, it is a helpless perplexity on any other.

It is to be observed also that those elements of universality which have been used to oust personality from the sphere of science are themselves functions of personality. It is curious to find such strenuous efforts put forth by persons to show that impersonal elements are enough to explain the universe. Popular statements are often made to the effect that Newton's "Principia" would neither lose nor gain for the scientific intelligence if it had been an anonymous production. Kant's "Critique" or Hegel's "Encyclopadie" would, we are told, be a neither more nor less important contribution to speculative science had it dropped from the clouds; and we are becoming familiarised with such expressions as these, as impersonal as the universality of reason itself, as impersonal as the love of truth and desire for its prevalence. No doubt it would be helpful to the maintenance of the thesis of the impersonality of reason if Newton's "Principia" or Kant's "Critique" had dropped from the clouds or had slowly evolved itself by slow gradations from the original fire mist, and come to shape and form without

the intervention of personal intelligence. But the strange thing is, that with the same breath the personal authorship of these works is asserted, and the remark is added that for the scientific intelligence they might as well be anonymous. This may be quite true if the scientific intelligence be an abstraction existing outside of and apart from the man who thinks or of men who think. But the expression "scientific intelligence" is only another proof of the sway which abstractions have over the minds of those who most loudly declaim against the abstractions held by other schools. For scientific intelligence, whether in Newton or in any other, belongs to the man. It has no independent existence of its own; behind it and in it is a living person, without whom it has neither vitality, being, nor action. We have not here to do with the movements of an intellectual machine, which goes along of itself or by itself, nor with the action of pure reason, which is complete in itself; all the intellectual action and all the reasoning we can conceive, however objective it may appear, has its roots in the personal, individual man, and cannot be understood in its origin and progress apart from him. Thought is rooted in life, and reasoning has its beginning and its justification in the personal conscious life of the individual man. The highest thing we know is personality, and all other processes of feeling, will, intelligence, conscience, and reason become sheer monstrosities when looked at apart from their position and relation to the personality in which they are, and whose action has given them being and subsistence. They are rational and intelligible when looked at in their living organic unity; when abstracted from them and made into entities, they become as irrational and monstrous as ever were any of the fictitious entities of the Schoolmen. For convenience of speech we have created these expressions of will, intelli-

gence, reason, and we fall under the dominion of the creatures we have made. We have continually to bring the abstractions of speech to the test of our concrete experience, and when we ask ourselves what we mean by such terms as these mentioned, we find that they are meaning less apart from the personal life of the person who thinks them and feels them. It is an illegitimate process altogether to abstract a faculty, give it a name, call it scientific intelligence or any other name, and proceed to confer on it an independent existence. So strong is the conviction rooted in our nature that personal existence is the highest form of existence, that as soon as we have given to this abstraction an independent existence we immediately proceed further to endow it with all the functions of personal life, and speak of it in language which implies will, purpose, and intelligence. So the deepest facts of life take their revenge upon us, and no sooner do we depersonalise persons and make them abstractions, than the abstractions gather to themselves the personal force again, take back the elements of which they were denuded, and make physicists talk of nature as if it were a person, and compel Darwin himself to speak of natural selection as if it possessed all the qualities of a person. Would it not be better to recognise at the outset the assumption which lies at the basis of all our science, art, and philosophy,—the assumption to wit of a life which is neither thought in itself, nor feeling in itself, nor other abstraction in itself, but a living person who feels, thinks, and acts, whose thoughts and feelings and acts these are, in whom they subsist, and from whom they draw all the truth that is in them?

Will not this land us in sheer individualism and prevent us from recognising those principles of science and philosophy which we also know to be universal and necessary?

If we insist on the fact that reason, intelligence, and will are only functions of personality, do we not in fact shut ourselves out from the recognition of that common and universal element which we also know? Not so; for as I only understand what reason, intelligence, and will mean when these are explicated to me by my own procedure, and are continually verified to me by the results to which I am led in my own personal action, so I am led also to the recognition of other persons who possess the same qualities which I find in myself. I find myself in a world of personal relations. The thoughts which other people think become thoughts in my mind, the feelings of other people are felt by me, and I am irresistibly led on to the conclusion that there are other personalities like my own. There are other people who reason, feel, and think, and whose reasonings, feelings, and thoughts are somehow conveyed to me, and become thoughts and feelings in me. The common and universal element is not found in an impersonal reason or universal self-consciousness, which lays hold on the individual and counts him as a mere incident in the process; it is rather found in the fact that persons are alike, feel alike, reason alike, and think alike. Because of this fundamental unity of nature in persons, there is a uniformity of result in all the personal experience of men, their life is one, and therefore the rational results of life are pervaded by uniformities which can be formulated, and reveal identities which underlie all the diversities, and give them form and shape. In our search after truth we shall not begin with the impersonal elements with which science and philosophy have made us so familiar, and seek out of these to build up the concrete personality we know. That is a hopeless task. On the contrary we shall make the one assumption which a concrete experience forces on us,

the assumption that I do not belong to reason, but reason belongs to me, that feeling does not make me, but I make feeling, and thought does not constitute me, but I constitute thought. The abstract force which the law of gravitation expresses in rule and measure is meaningless to me, apart from the experience of force which I myself have and exert. The feelings which others have obtain validity for me only when I also feel, and thought can only be conceived in a living person. What we call faculties are only ways in which personality works; what we call laws of nature, are only results of common experience and modes of personal action.

This assumption will also justify the universal and the necessary end of human experience. I can enter into all the recorded results of human experience, as these are in science, literature, and art. It is free to me to do so. Organically I have received the organic experiences of my more immediate ancestors; but educationally I can receive the inheritance won for me by all the great workers of the past, and may think the thoughts of Plato, or sing the songs of Homer, or learn righteousness at the feet of Moses and Isaiah. Other creatures are limited to organic change; men have found a more excellent, more expeditious, and a less expensive way of recording their experience, and the highest personal life prolongs itself in language. The explanation is that all humanity is in every man. The possibility of universal human experience lies before every living person. There is thus an aim and a goal set before every man, as to what he may attain and may become. Great poets, great thinkers, great inventors, great leaders in action, as those have been in former times, reveal to us the altitudes which our common human nature has reached, and they manifest not merely the uniformities and

the averages, but also those elevations which the average man may in course of time attain unto. As a matter of fact it is not by the mere abstract result which may be reached when personality has been left out of account that the great men of the past have raised the common level of human life; these abstract results may be tabulated in manuals and formulated in unimpressive, dry-as-dust, lifeless tables. It is altogether different when we go to the great masters themselves, and find ourselves in contact with them. Then the borders of feeling are widened, and thought becomes vivid, and reason moves more swiftly because we are in contact with men of a mightier mould. But the fact that I am able to recognise their greatness proves our kinship, and I know that their works are the outgrowth of a personality like my own. Their relation to me and mine to them is a personal relation. This holds true even in the case of men who lived long ago, and it is much more true in the case of men living at this hour.

When we pass from those relations which may be called intellectual to those which are moral and spiritual, we come to a sphere in which abstractions ought to have but little sway; and yet strange to say it is here, in the very centre of personal life and personal relationship, that abstractions have made greatest havoc. Here words which have no meaning apart from personal relationship have been raised to an independent existence, and treated as if there were no such things as persons in the universe. The highest reality of moral life does not consist in our relation to law or to a rule. For the best and highest law merely expresses our relation to a person, or to persons regarded as a community. The moral virtues express either features of personal character, or relations which subsist between person and persons. We need not dwell on this truth, as it

has been set forth with truth and power in the Boyle Lectures by Professor Wace. "If you wish to develop all the righteousness of which a man is capable, you must have a wise man and a philosopher constantly by his side; you must put righteous people around him, and in proportion as his heart answers to their heart will he become righteous. It is seen that righteousness is distinguished from love as being only a partial aspect of that higher excellence. Righteousness, we might almost say, is the metaphor, love is the reality; because the reality of life consists in the relation of persons to a person, and not in the relation of persons to a rule" (Wace, "Morality and Christianity," pp. 42-3. 4th Edition). The complex of moral relations in which we stand may fitly be summed up in the word love. They are all parts of love; and truth, righteousness, courage, justice, as well as sympathy and helpfulness, form part of the supreme ethical power which we call love. Love maketh no ill to his neighbour, love is the fulfilling of the law.

No limit can be fixed to the potential development of personality, nor to the breadth, fulness, and contents of what a perfect personality may include in itself. If we look at the great personalities which history has made known to us, we shall gain some conception of the height to which it may rise. By marvellous patience and supreme insight Newton was able to make the physical processes of nature part of his personal experience. He entered into the life of nature, and made it so far part of his own life. He was able to place invisible scales, in which he could weigh and measure the heavenly bodies, and the force which made the apple fall caused the tide to ebb and flow, and kept the spheres in their paths and places. He saw into the depths of the universe, and as far as he saw, realised

in his own personal life what he had seen. So far as science has been able to master the secret of the universe, and so far as any man has mastered science, precisely so far is the life of the universe become incarnate in that man, and the forces of nature in their highest meaning have become part of his personal life. Similarly one who has mastered the natural sciences, and so far as he has read the processes of life, has taken into his own life and involved in himself the great force of organic nature. The world of science lives in man. In a similar way Shakespeare seems to have made the whole round of human experience, so far as regards their thought, feeling, action, part of his own experience. His insight into human nature is marvellous. We cannot speak in detail of these fine spirits, touched to fine issues, the Platos, Kants, and Hegels of our race, who have striven to solve the mystery of thought and life, and even in their failures have enlarged the boundaries of human experience; nor of those higher spirits still, who have taken religion as their sphere, and who believed that they saw the living God face to face, and have felt the rapture of fellowship and union with Him.

In these men, so far as their greatness went, the universe attained to consciousness, and became vocal and intelligent. The dim and mechanical, the organic and unconscious processes of nature were lifted up by them into the kingdom of conscious light, freedom, and purpose, and became part of a free conscious life. In their personal life nature lived again a new transformed life, in a higher sphere and with wider issues. One moment of personal life sums up ages of unconscious, mechanical striving towards a goal and a purpose impressed on the atoms from without, the true meaning of which was only realised when consciousness began to be. What has been won for us by

the great men of the past has now become part of the inheritance of the race, and the treasured experience of former ages may become food for the living personalities of our time. The age of great men is not past, for at present, more than ever could have been before, room has been won for the appearance of a great personality. The gathered experience of the race lies at hand for appropriation by him who can take it home to himself, and the life and thought of the universe may become truly the personal life of a man.

On the other hand, the limitations of great personalities are as instructive as their greatness. All of them have been great in a one-sided way, and all of them lack the fulness and roundness of an all-sided personality. Thinkers have failed in action, and rulers have failed in thought, heroes have been great in courage and little in all else, while saints have been great in holiness and love, but sometimes their views of life have been narrow and intense. No great man, who is only a man, has been great on all sides, great as a poet, great as a thinker, great as a ruler, great as a hero, great as a reformer, great as a saint. But in their limited and imperfect fashion they have revealed to us how personality takes home to itself and makes its own the force and the life which is in nature and in society. Their lives also make manifest that what they have taken from nature and society they restore again in richer, greater fashion, with interest for the usage. They made the most of themselves, and realised as far as they could the personal self, in order that they might serve men. Self-realization in order to service, widest, deepest culture of the elements of personality in order to fit for higher, nobler work, such is the law of life we see in the spirits which are touched to finer

issues, which law, whether of set purpose or otherwise, they all manifest.

No allusion has been made up to this time to the greatest personality yet known to history, who alone has shown to men what human life ought to be and may become. When we study the life, read the words, and ponder on the works of Jesus Christ, we find ourselves in the presence of One who has made "every human life a part of His own life." He is great without limitation in all the lines of greatness; —great as a thinker, for there is more of truth and force in the few fragmentary sayings of our Lord than in all written words besides. When we ponder on any one of His sayings, it grows on us as we think of it; and as we let our thoughts, conscience, will, and affection dwell on any one of His words, they broaden out to an infinite reach on all sides, and open up for us vistas of new suggestiveness which reach forth without limit. The more men have dwelt on His words,—and for centuries the wisest and best of our race have given their days and nights to the thought of them,—the more unsearchable the meaning has been found to be. Amid the changing circumstances of the world, and the problems raised anew as civilization grows more complex, these words of Jesus have been found fruitful of solutions and rich in suggestions for personal and national guidance. It is strange to find His suggestive words and thoughts in the writings of men who simply ignore the facts of His life and the words which He spake. The great conception of solidarity which bulks so largely in current thought is to be found, both the fact and the expression of it, in His sayings. Altruism, which appears in certain moral systems as the culmination of scientific ethics and as the outcome of the struggle for existence, however illogical that is, has found far more scientific

expression in His words than they have ever yet received elsewhere. Then how complete His insight into the laws and processes of nature. He saw the living process as it was. He did not need to compare and classify, abstract and generalise. With supreme insight He looked into the living, organic changes as they were, and uttered with full knowledge the adequate expression of what He saw. As was His knowledge of nature, so was His knowledge of man; not a mere abstract knowledge of man, thin, shadowy, and vague, but a knowledge of the actual living man before Him, in concrete personality and particular differences from other men; be he Jew or Gentile, learned or uneducated, a pretender or a penitent, a teacher or a friend, as soon as he came to Jesus he was known by Him, and known in all the peculiarities of his character. And the words which Jesus spake on the spur of the moment were words which fitted the occasion. Great in His knowledge of nature, and great with unequalled greatness in His knowledge of men, He was great in all the phases of personal character. He was great in sympathy: no one felt the burdens of humanity as He felt them, no one lost sight of himself as He did. To help men, to save them from unworthiness and guilt, to set before them the ideal of true life, and to give them strength to live up to it, are aims He always had in view. No higher ideal of human life has yet been given to the world than was actually realised in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and the verdict of a hostile criticism to-day is not only the negative one, We can find no fault in this man, but also the positive one, Never man spake like this man, as, in fact, none ever lived like Him. We shall return to this in other relations; at present our object is simply to show, that while history has abundant examples of men who are great with a one-sided greatness,

yet also there is in history a character who is perfect, complete on all sides, and who has gathered up into Himself all the broken types of greatness which the world has seen before or since, and given to all who choose to see the name and type of what life and work here ought to be.

III.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

IT is well at this stage of our argument to look steadily at the charge of Anthropomorphism which is freely urged against Theism by men of the most opposite schools. It is assumed that religion alone justly underlies this accusation, while science and philosophy are regarded as if they had got quite beyond the suspicion of being anthropomorphic. "Man never knows how anthropomorphic he is," is a saying of Goethe's which Mr. Matthew Arnold has made familiar to all of us. In his peculiar way he has reiterated the statement almost to weariness. He is evidently of opinion, that by speaking of "a stream," and by steadily reading "it" wherever ordinary people read "him" or "he," he has got beyond Anthropomorphism, and can from this position safely sneer at the bishops and others who have provoked his mockery. It does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Arnold to ask whether his favourite formula, "the stream of tendency whereby all things fulfil the law of their being," may not itself be anthropomorphic. It is, at all events, a thought which men can think and can express in language after the fashion of men. Goethe's saying has a wider range than Mr. Arnold seems to have apprehended, and has an application not only to those questions to which Mr. Arnold has applied it, but also to

those other questions from which he has shut it out. If it can be shown that a charge of anthropomorphism can be brought against all the sciences and philosophies, as fairly as it can be brought against theology, then it is time that the charge should cease to be brought against theology. It is not difficult to show that all the conclusions which philosophy has won regarding man, the world, and God, are tinged with anthropomorphism, and the systems which are most deeply tinged with it are precisely those which were imagined by their founders to be most free from it. To say that theology is anthropomorphic may be true; but the charge can imply no reproach until it is shown that philosophy and science are free from the same reproach. The old proverb is here applicable, Those who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones.

If we take the systems of philosophy which from the dawn of speculation until now have been in vogue, or the questions which at present divide the schools of philosophy, we can easily show that from line to circumference they are wholly anthropomorphic. Materialism itself, which has obtained so large a crowd of followers, is only, when analysed to its elements, the abstraction of one aspect of human nature, and this abstraction is then enlarged to the measure of the universe, and made to do duty as the rational explanation of it. We are conscious of motion, of force, and of necessity. We know it in ourselves. And we find when we act on the assumption of its truth our action is everywhere justified. It is one element in our life, and it is easy to see how readily this element may take universality home to itself, and swallow up all the other elements usually found inseparable from it. Let it be remembered here that we are not inquiring into the truth of Materialism, we are only asking whether it is or is not

anthropomorphic; and the question answers itself as soon as it is asked. Materialism is the projection into space of one aspect of human life, and the shadow of it is mistaken by its advocates for the universe itself. Nor is the matter helped when we pass from the school of Materialism to the schools which have recognized other elements than those of force in the universe. Neither have these got beyond anthropomorphism. If we take pure idealists like Berkeley, we find that they also have taken an aspect of human life, projected it, and enlarged it to make the universe. And the world is only an enlarged copy of one side of human life. If we take a system like that of Spinoza, of which so much has been written in recent years, and of which men speak as if Spinoza had got beyond the accidents and limitations of human view, and saw the truth in universality and purity, what is the real essence of the system of Spinoza? It is to be found not in his definitions, nor in the axioms, nor yet in what he is pleased to call demonstrations, but in a simple fact, which he quietly slips in as if it were of no consequence,—in the simple fact that man is both a *res cogitans* and a *res extensa*. The universal substance, with infinite attributes, of which, however, only two can be known, to wit strength and extension, is, when we come to look at it, simply man reduced to an extended and thinking thing, and enlarged indefinitely. Surely we may borrow here the language of Mr. Matthew Arnold, and say, that here is a magnified, non-natural man, non-natural because it is the enlargement to monstrosity of two aspects of ourselves, and these not the highest. Yet we are told that Spinoza has transcended anthropomorphism and approached near to objective truth. If this be to transcend anthropomorphism, truly it is easy to be overcome.

As Spinoza has put man under a microscope and has seen

those aspects of him which he regarded enlarged to the utmost limits of existence, so certain followers of his, who have also drunk deeply of the scientific spirit of modern time, have looked at man from a distance so great as to see him reduced to the size of an atom. But both the universe of Spinoza and the atom of Prof. Clifford are formed in the image of man. Mind-stuff is simply man minimised and brought down to atomic dimensions. "A moving molecule of inorganic matter does not possess mind or consciousness, but it possesses a small piece of mind-stuff. When molecules are so combined together as to form the film on the tender side of a jelly fish, the elements of mind-stuff which go along with them are so combined as to form the faint beginnings of sentience. . . . When matter takes the complex form of a living human brain, the corresponding mind-stuff takes the form of a human consciousness, having intelligence and matter" (Clifford on Mind, No. IX., p. 65). In this essay on the natures of things in themselves, Prof. Clifford, with that remarkable clearness of statement characteristic of all he wrote, has set forth the conception which was dimly hovering before the mind of Spencer and of Bain, which has now come to be known as the double aspect theory. Mind corresponds to matter as the concave of a circle to the convex. They are inseparable, and appear in the molecule, as in larger and more complex measure they appear in man. It is not our purpose here to criticise this view. A trenchant criticism of it from another point of view than ours will be found in the work of Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, entitled *On Mr. Spencer's Unification of Knowledge.* What we seek here to point out is how anthropomorphic all this is.

So in truth are all systems of philosophy, for they deal with the relation of mind to matter, and of matter to mind. They always start with these factors of our own

personal life, and they always come back to them with what experience they have gained by the way. They are anthropomorphic, whether with Spinoza they postulate a universal substance which has the known attributes of extension and thought; with Kant a manifold of sense, with *à priori* forms which make knowledge and experience possible; with Hegel a universal self-consciousness, which constitutes the objects of its knowledge, and makes them possible to be known as objects; or with Spencer, an inscrutable power which must ever remain unknown, and yet, strange to say, can be named by man. All these great constructive systems, strive as they may, never get beyond anthropomorphism; and the more they strive to get beyond it, the more anthropomorphic they become. Even Darwinism, or evolution, which is thought by some, Strauss, for example, to have won an objective view, is, when we consider it, more anthropomorphic than any other system. It is simply an extension of Malthusianism to the animal world; and the fierce struggle for existence which he sees going on throughout all life is only an enlarged form of the competition with which we are all familiar. Darwinism is Malthusianism writ large.

It is remarkable to find how much more anthropomorphic than in former days are the systems of philosophy now in vogue. Formerly the world had an independent existence. The discovery of modern psychology is that the world arises in consciousness. Formerly unity was supposed to reside in the objects themselves; now the highest category is self-consciousness. Certain schools have a way of talking about the progress of science, and delight to point out how science is removing further and further from the anthropocentrical point of view. Once the earth was regarded by man as the centre of things, but that was by-

and-by displaced by the truer system which makes the sun the centre around which the planets move. And this we are told is a type of how the sciences make progress. It is not necessary to enter into detail, for details sufficient may be found in all the organs of literature at the present time. Alongside of this view is to be placed the view of Kant, which shifted the centre of gravity from the objects known to the knowing subject. He himself has compared his work with the master-work of Copernicus; and others are never tired of telling us of the revolution he has wrought in the relations between the human intelligence and the objects of its study. His system is great, fruitful, and the principles he unfolded have commended themselves to the thinkers of the time which has elapsed since he wrote. But the revolution he wrought is precisely the reverse of that wrought by Copernicus. Copernicus removed the centre to the sun, and made man and his dwelling-place a satellite. Kant places man in the centre of the world, and makes all other existences satellites of him. There is no unity in the world, nor order, until categories native to intelligence come as form to shape and twist together the manifoldness of the world.

Both the later criticisms and the developments of Kantianism, more particularly the criticism and the development by Hegel and his followers, proceed along the same path inaugurated by the master of modern philosophy. The most anthropomorphic of all systems of philosophy is that of Hegel. "The centre of the world lies in our own nature as self-conscious beings, and in that life with our fellows, which, in different aspects, constitutes alike the secular and the divine community. The spirit fostered by physical science, and the mood familiar to all of us—the mood which weighs man's paltry life and its concerns

against the 'pomp of worlds' and the measureless fields of space—is in reality less philosophical than that of the poet and humanist to whom this pomp is barren save as the back-ground of the human drama. Ordinary people get most of their metaphysics through religion or through poetry, and they probably come nearer to the truth that way than if they went to the professed philosophers" (Mr. Seth, in "Essays on Philosophical Criticism," p. 27);—a statement sufficiently firm and by no means without justification in the present state of opinion. With all its drawbacks, we find that this school is almost alone in its indication of the right of men to recognise higher categories than are admitted by the prevailing tendencies of English thought. No doubt they have introduced a peculiar phantasmagoria of their own, and their language is as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp. Sometimes, yea often, one does not know where to have them. But alone of philosophies at the present time, the Hegelian school are face to face with the problems of philosophy and of life, and alone recognise the breadth and complexity of them. The solution they offer is, in many respects, as we think, untenable, but we must acknowledge the fairness and manliness of the grapple and the breadth which mark their apprehension of the issues.

One of the most marked of the features of the thought of our time is the prominence of what may be called the sociological problem. It is attacked by all schools and by the most diverse methods. The positivist, who restricts human knowledge, and confines it to the ascertainment and registration of phenomena, is yet constrained to admit an exception when he speaks of humanity. He has here been forced to become metaphysical, and has instituted a worship of humanity to afford a direct expression of the religious need unfelt by him, and unrecognised at the earlier stages of the development

of his system. He has personified human nature, and with the same breath declares it to be impersonal. Mr. Herbert Spencer, who has so many points in common with Positivism, and also strives with all his might to elaborate points of difference, has been able to advance to the thought that society is an organism. The typical organism, according to Mr. Spencer, is a living body, and he has been able to find many likenesses between society and a living body. These likenesses we need not enumerate, for in the long run Mr. Spencer is stopped by the fundamental unlikeness between the two. For every organism, he finds on reflection, has an apparatus of nerves, a sensorium from the integration and differentiation of which it has grown to what it now is. On the principles of his philosophy, he can do nothing without a sensorium. As however no sensorium is forthcoming big enough to serve for the social organism, he is constrained to let his conception sink from the altitude of the organism to the level of an aggregate. This has grave results for his ultimate view of what ethics and philosophy may mean. For one thing he is constrained to deny that the welfare of the aggregate apart from that of the unit is an end to be sought. For another thing, as, according to him, knowledge has its origin in nervous shocks, however abstract knowledge may become, nervous shocks accompany it all through; when he passes into a region where nervous shocks are not available, he must perforce stop short, or get incoherent.

Nor are these workers in philosophy in England, who, more or less under the influence of Hegel, are seeking to solve the problems set to us by our own experience, in a much better case for the solution of the sociological problem than Mr. Spencer is. Self-consciousness is their highest category. Where Mr. Spencer postulates a sensorium, they postulate a self. When Mr. Spencer cannot find a sensorium

he candidly says so, and lets his system take the consequences. He has not the fertility of resource which our Hegelian friends have. And he has not yet been able to see how a thing can be and not be at the same time. Of course such amazing fluidity of language is a great help in exposition, and due advantage is taken of it by those who study philosophy under the auspices of Hegel. A universal self is their grand panacea for the surmounting of difficulties and for the reconciling of contradictions. Where shall we find, then, a universal self to correspond to the hypothetical unity of the social organism? When we have learnt the new language and mastered the new categories, which meet us at every turn, and come to know the universal, the particular, and the synthesis of the two in the individual, we shall have advanced a little way towards the comprehension of the universal self, as it is the organ of the social organism. It is very likely that if we venture to disagree that we shall be told we do not understand the problem or the solution. The social organism is an organism of organisms, we are told, and society comes to self-consciousness and attains its purposes in the self-consciousness and purposes of *every* individual. Then we ask, What and where is the unity, the individual self-consciousness of the social organism? It is as far to seek and as difficult to find as the sensorium which is desiderated by Mr. Spencer. It is somewhere in the air, ready to settle down on any individual self-consciousness able to receive it. When we ask them to be more definite, they complain sadly of the lamentable ignorance which prompted us to ask such a question. For that only reveals to them how far we are from having apprehended the true significance of the universal and the particular and the Hegelian doctrine of limit. For it appears that "there exists no such thing as individual self-consciousness."

Common people who think they have an individual self-consciousness have not really asked themselves how is self-consciousness possible, and have not apprehended the greatness of the highest category. It is not our purpose to enter into a criticism of the Hegelian philosophy in its more recent manifestations; our purpose is to ask whether it is not anthropomorphic; and when we ask the question we find at once that it is more anthropomorphic than any other system. It begins with self-consciousness, it magnifies it. It postulates a self co-extensive with society, and in the interests of the self of the social organism, makes the individual an abstraction. It still further enlarges the self we know to the magnitude of the universe, and the great first postulate of Hegel, when accurately scrutinised, is identical with the simplest problem of human knowledge. Up and down, right and left, we are continually turning round in the same turnpike stair; and the only vision we get a glimpse of is simply ourselves, sometimes enlarged and sometimes reduced to small dimensions.

The question we have been asking is apparently one which philosophers and men of science have not asked themselves when they were denouncing Anthropomorphism. The question before their mind seems to be this, Is there not a tendency in human nature to read itself into the universe? and ought this tendency to be vigorously controlled by a constant adherence to a fixed process of investigation, and by bringing the results of our own work, and of the work of others, to a rigid verification by reference to this method? "The perceiving mind has mixed itself up with the thing perceived, and not merely in the way in which it always must, in the way which constitutes cognition, but in quite other and arbitrary ways, by wishes, by prejudices, by crotchets, by dreams" ("Natural Religion," p. 9). The region of the scientific method is a contrivance whereby we are

enabled to get rid, as far as possible, of our human wishes, prejudices, crotchets, and dreams. It is a way of making sure that the voice we hear is really the voice of nature, and not the echo of our own voice. It is not anthropomorphic for the mind to mix itself up with the thing perceived in the way which constitutes cognition. But it is anthropomorphic to do this in arbitrary ways. The reason of the one reservation made by the author of "Ecce Homo" is that in the one case we must do so because we must; necessity justifies the anthropomorphism. But the other case is arbitrary, and must be overcome. Now no doubt there is here a valid distinction drawn, and one neglected duty of science is to show how the wishes and crotchets are possible,—a task it has not yet faced. But when we ask ourselves what is this rigorous scientific method which is to distinguish always between the necessary and the arbitrary, we find that it is precisely that method which consists in reducing a problem to its lowest terms, eliminating everything that is distinctive of the special problems of the more complex sciences, and making problems of life and spirit to be only special cases of the conservation of energy. Will, purpose, and personality are considered as kinds of prejudices or crotchets; even if they have any reality as they are in man, they are considered as utterly without justification when they are looked at as having significance for the universe at large. No doubt there are prejudices and crotchets abroad in the minds of men; and one of these is the persistent notion that man can be accounted for by anything less universal than what we find in him. One of the most persistent dreams of science is the confidence it shows, that in course of time it will understand and account for the world from within the world. This has been the dream of science and philosophy from the beginning, that it can

construct the universe from within ;—a vain dream, as shown by the failure of every constructive system up to this time. Not one of them has withstood hostile criticism. The vainest of all dreams is the scientific dream, for its postulates necessarily imply what lies beyond itself. Its assumption is that the quantity of matter in the universe is fixed, and it cannot answer the question of how or by what it is fixed. And the latest generalisation, the great conception of the conservation of energy, which means that the sum of energy is constant, raises exactly the same questions. By whom or by what has the quantity of matter and energy in the universe been determined? Any answer which science can give to these questions has not in reality advanced beyond the standpoint of Lucretius ; and no answer can be given on the terms of science, except that matter and energy determine their own quantity, or chance determined it. Either answer is irrational.

A similar difficulty lies before all the constructive systems of philosophy. It is too large a problem for solution with the material man has in hand, when he confines himself to the world in itself, or even when he takes himself in as part of the world. The attempt to construct the universe from within has led to the one-sidedness of philosophy, to the hypostatising of abstractions, and the depersonalising of men. So we have the monstrous self-consciousness of the Hegelian school, the impersonal will of Schopenhauer, and the unconscious intelligence of Hartmann. So must it ever be so long as men pursue this dream. We need to change the conditions of the problem, as in very truth history has already done for us, and by changing it we get a problem, difficult indeed, but one which is more within our grasp. The new problem, which is also old, is, not to construct the universe and God out of the elements of

human experience, but taking for granted that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, then to justify the ways of God to man and to the world. The new problem is not to construct God, but to seek to understand His relation to the world.

As a consequence of the attempt to construct the universe out of the elements of human experience, we have the curious result that the human mind stands to-day before nature in the same attitude as it stood in the infancy of the race. The description of Natural Religion contained in the new book by the author of "Ecce Homo" differs in no essential particular from a description of Natural Religion as it might be written from a study of the mythologies of Greece and Rome and India. No doubt *Natural Religion* has been able to work into the description all that men have been able to learn in the interval regarding nature, its laws and processes. No doubt also in all that belongs to second causes, the attitude of the modern mind is more intelligent than the attitude of the early fathers of men. But a deeper analysis reveals the fact, that in the presence of the power manifested in nature, the modern man of science is just as helpless as those who first began to think of the mystery of the world. Those people knew a region of ordered sequence, and a sphere where law reigned, and, as far as science is concerned, the only difference is, that the sphere of law which we have recognised is larger than theirs. We have seen law when they only saw caprice. But when we press on to the further question of what law and order mean, and from what and from whence they came, science seems to get irrational. Most men of science are quite contented to ascertain the facts, and to measure the forces and their ways of working, without further inquiry into the reason

or origin of them. But when science gets philosophical, and seeks the reasons of things, it usually takes refuge with chance, or accident, which as men of science use it is simply an occult cause about which they know nothing.

What a large part chance has to play in the theory of evolution, and how diligently its advocates seek to conceal its working! In this relation and on these lines no advance has been made by men towards a solution of the problem of life. Their aim is to get rid of caprice and arbitrariness; the result of their speculation has been that these return on them in a more absolute form than before. Formerly caprice was ascribed to the waywardness of imperfect personal beings. Modern speculation has postulated it as inherent in the very system of things. The evolutionist can explain the origin of new varieties only by having recourse to "occasional freaks of nature." "The lucky accident, the casual combination of circumstances which produced the first elongation of the receptacle in the strawberry, has never happened to befall its more modest kinsfolk. For on such occasional freaks of nature the whole evolution of new varieties entirely depends" (Grant Allen, "The Evolutionist at Large," p. 24). Are the occasional freaks of nature any more rational or more adequate to serve as a scientific explanation than the caprice of the gods of Greece? It was open to us to regard the world as natural, and to hope that by patient study we might come to know the laws and processes of nature. If we accept evolution we are shut out from that hope, for, confessedly, caprice is enthroned as the only principle which can enable us to account for the evolution of new varieties. When we seek to know what has been the real course and the actual history of life on the earth, at every stage where new varieties appear we have only to lift up our hands in

astonishment and piously say, "A new freak of nature." This is all that we can do, and no rational explanation is forthcoming to satisfy our legitimate curiosity. This is one consequence of the attempt to construct a rational theory of the course of life from elements which are within, to the exclusion of any directing agency from without. It leaves us helpless, to bring in freaks of nature as a *deus ex machina* in our hour of need.

The history of the ancient mythologies enforces the same truth. It shows what has been accomplished by man when left face to face with nature, and a study of it shows how hopeless an attempt it is to have an intelligent view of man or of the world if no distinction is made between God and the world. A study of modern science in its speculative aspect, and a study of modern constructive philosophy, give rise to the impression, that with enlarged means of knowledge and with a wider experience man is going through a similar process and repeating a similar course of reflection, to be brought again to a similar conclusion. As Bishop Martensen profoundly says, "The mythical consciousness must go through all the manifold forms in which it is possible to take the world-idea instead of God. It must roam through various ranges of existence and make of each a form for the divine. It sees the highest powers of life in the stars, in the heavenly luminaries; it surmises the secret of the All-living in the silent vegetable world; it regards the animal creation as a sort of hieroglyphics, the mystical disguise of the Deity, until the sphinx of Nature is thrown down, and man himself is recognised as the true form of God,—a perception which gives to the myths of Greece and of the North a loftier spirituality than that of the nature myths of the East" (Martensen, "Dogmatics," p. 228, Clark's Translation).

Martensen sees in mythology a progress from the natural to the spiritual, and from the impersonal to the personal.

In the conscious reflective process of Greek thought a similar process is made manifest. Greek thought begins with an attempt to find a physical explanation of the universe. It was the easiest and most obvious course to find in some outward physical principle the explanation of the world. Water was the origin of all things, or fire was, or, as their thought and their expression of it widened and their first explanations were seen to be inadequate, matter itself became to them indestructible, was confused with existence in general, and was treated as the sufficient explanation and reason of things, until at length came as the summation of that tendency the atomic theory of Democritus, and his entire rejection of the supernatural. This way of explaining things could go no further; it was exhausted, and a new and higher tendency arose, which to matter added mind, and the highest philosophy to which unaided human intelligence has arisen was reached in the life and thought of Socrates, of Plato, and of Aristotle. Unaided human speculation has never risen to a higher level than it has done in Greece. Democritus is as good a type as any which modern times have given us of the speculation which makes matter to be first and the sufficient explanation, as that which has from the outset the promise and the potency of all forms of life. The problems of Greek thought are the problems of modern thought, and the solutions also have a remarkable resemblance. There is no system of philosophy in vogue now but has had its prototype in Greece, and the failure of Greek philosophy and science to satisfy the needs of man's nature, or to attain to permanance, reveals to the thoughtful student that somehow some

of the elements which are essential to a true solution have been left out of account.*

It is sad to think of the unavailing toil and effort which have been spent on these attempts to construct the universe from within. The attempts of modern thought have not been more successful than those of ancient thought, and mainly for the same reason, because they will persist in treading a path which ever returns on itself, and presents in various forms the old solutions of Materialism, Idealism, Pantheism, or some combination and modification of these olden views. Greek philosophy sought to explain the universe as a whole. It set itself to make such an analysis of the world known to man as to enable him to name one element cause and the rest effect of it: what is the unity of the world? what its cause? and what its purpose? He sought to find a single cause, be it personal or impersonal, conscious or unconscious; let it be only such as to give him a fulcrum from which to work, and every solution he found was inadequate, whether it was the atoms of Democritus, or the self-thinking thought of Aristotle. So also are the modern equivalents, whether these be the universal substance of Spinoza, or

* We can only hint at the parallelism between Greek and modern speculation. But any competent history of the progress of Greek thought will give the facts; more particularly they will be found in Zeller's works on Greek philosophy, and in "The Greek Philosophers," by A. W. Benn. The last work is particularly valuable, inasmuch as it establishes a conclusion quite contrary to that which the author thinks it proves. He has been able to show how closely the course of modern thought resembles the course of Greek speculation. The resemblance is very close indeed, and the inference he draws is that of Agnosticism, whereas the true inference ought to be a doubt regarding the validity of the method which lands us in such strange results, —results which if acted on would paralyse every high aspiration of our nature, and would land us in hopeless pessimism.

the panlogismus of Hegel (as Hartmann felicitously calls it), or the unknowable power of Spencer. But history has already made an analysis for us if we would only accept it, —an analysis which enables us to speak rationally of the cause of the universe and the universe as effect, which enables us to give a rational account of the progress of life on the globe, which enables us to pass from artificial selection, under man's guidance, to natural selection, without a break, which enables us also to understand human history, and to look forward to a goal, when, as the result of the long struggle for existence, life shall be realised in freedom and fulness, in righteousness, holiness, and joy. This analysis was effected long ago, in and by means of the Hebrew race, to whom it was a settled basis of conviction that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The modern mind has surely travelled long enough in the other path; might not the Agnostic turn to look at this problem, and try to see how life and duty look in the light of it? It would relieve them from the painful duty of denial, and of placing themselves in flagrant contradiction to many of the deepest convictions of men. It would permit them to retain all that science has won regarding the order of the world, physical, organic, and moral, and would give them a hope that the results obtained through the long struggle of life in the earth would not pass away at the time when the physical energy of the universe is exhausted and nature becomes dead; in a word, there would on these terms be the sure and certain hope that life would continue and love would abide and the long and painful struggle would not have been in vain. These things are sure if the analysis reached through the Hebrew race is true, and if there is a distinction between God and the world.

IV.

DEAN MANSEL AND MR. HERBERT SPENCER.

THE question which we seek to answer is not one which makes a statement of the Theistic argument necessary. From our point of view we are entitled to regard Theism as a datum, and not as a result won by laboured investigation and prolonged argument. In any event, we might dispense with such an investigation, inasmuch as in the works of Dr. Flint, Dr. Conder, De Pressensé, Janet, and others, we have an adequate vindication of the Theistic argument, and both its essential validity has been shown, and its compatibility with all the recent conquests of science, in all the spheres of scientific work. It is not necessary for us to agree with these eminent writers in every position they assume, but when all allowances are made, and peculiarities taken into account, enough remains to prove, that apart from Theism there is no intelligible world, and no sufficient explanation of the origin, history, progress, and purpose of the universe. The existence of God is necessary as an intelligent datum for the explanation of the world. But those arguments and considerations which go to prove the existence and attributes of God from our point of view are of supreme value as indications of some of the ways by which He may be known. We are relieved from the arduous duty of proving from man and

nature the existence of God and of the supernatural. For such a mode of proof is constrained to leave out of account so much that really forms a great part of the whole impression made on us, and is compelled from the nature of the case to dwell so much on what is merely formal and intellectual in the argument, that readers of books on Theism invariably feel how utterly inadequate has been the statement of the springs, sources, and grounds of our belief in the Living God. Our Theistic arguments are not without cogency, and have been of the highest service, both positively and negatively—positively in so far as they have established or gone to establish the conception of the being and character of a living Maker and Ruler of the universe, who is beginning and end, cause and purpose of everything that is; negatively, as they have critically shown how utterly inadequate every other conception is. Here, however, we do not attempt to set forth these arguments in order; nor do we seek to enumerate the avenues by which the higher and spiritual power manifests and may manifest itself to the lower. We simply take as many of the results of the Theistic arguments as we really need, and look at them as ways or means by which the Living God manifests Himself unto men.

Although we are enabled by the form of our problem to dispense with the statement of the Theistic argument, yet that freedom only brings more vividly before us the difficulties which metaphysics and speculative science have gathered round the conception of God. If we speak of the conception of God as a person with consciousness and will, we are immediately confronted with endless discussions regarding the absolute, the infinite, the unconditioned, and other phrases of that order. On the other hand, speculative science, which has already so many unverified notions of

its own, refuses to allow us to speak of any conception which has not been verified by the method of the physical sciences. The curious thing here is the confusion of parties, and their no less strange agreement. An apologist, in the interests of revelation, and with a view to the silencing of opponents, affirms that we have no true knowledge of God, and his arguments are adopted by the Agnostic, who makes the "unknowable" a mysterious and convenient background to an omniscient system which seeks to explain the universe.

With regard to the views of Sir William Hamilton and Dean Mansel it is not necessary to say much. Had we been writing a quarter of a century ago, a critical examination of their views would have been indispensable. For at that time the philosophy of the unconditioned had a real existence, and was a living influence in the minds of men. It has now disappeared, and left no trace behind save in a few quarters where the unfit survives. It has left its influence, no doubt, on the system of Mr. Spencer, but the part it has to play in that system is more ornamental than useful. For the "unknowable" has no vital relation to what can be known, and only appears when the system of knowable relations gets into a difficulty, from which it has to be violently delivered. It is not surprising that the philosophy of Hamilton and Mansel should have no living influence on thought at the present time. When we take up the once famous Bampton Lectures, and read them over again, we are irresistibly reminded of the old Greek puzzle about the possibility of motion. No doubt that puzzle caused some trouble to speculative thinkers at the time, but all the while actual movement in space was possible to every living man at Athens. So while the Dean was drawing out his verbal contradictions, and confounding the sceptic with a scepticism more absolute than his own, the life and thought of

the time were moving on in utter disregard of these verbal dexterities to quite other issues. For philosophy has quietly accepted these contradictions, and has sought to show how they can be reconciled in a higher unity. While the work of scientific thinkers has tended more and more to the raising of those issues which the Dean sought to foreclose, science and philosophy have disregarded these verbal quibbles, and in so doing have been absolutely right. For the triumph of Dean Mansel's logic could only result here as the paralysis of all the higher powers of man; no axiom of Euclid, no definition of geometry could survive the destructive analysis of such sceptical logic.

Yet, on reflection, the fallacy in the argument of Dean Mansel is obvious. It is only a matter of definition. Grant to him that the absolute and infinite are what he defines them to be, and contradictions without number can easily be manufactured by a pen less dextrous than his. If we demur to the definition, and with Ulrici say that "the absolute is not conditioned by anything else, and so far it is the unconditioned, but yet only because it is itself the positive condition of everything else," then the contradictions elaborated by the Dean vanish into thin air. Along with them vanish also the tribe of imbecilities and powerlessnesses of the human mind of which so much has been made. It is easy to make contradictions when our definitions are arranged with a view to bring about that result. Our definitions must, however, correspond to what is real, and a real basis for our conception of the absolute is found when we regard it as the positive condition of all else. This view relieves the conception of all difficulty, and will be found on examination to satisfy all the uses made of the word in common and in scientific speech. The absolute implies relation, and is itself the ground of relation, without which

the conception of relation were inconceivable. As property implies substance, as predicate implies subject, and as action implies agent, so relation implies the absolute. The strength of the argumentation now in view lies in the assumption of the unrelatedness of the absolute,—an assumption not justified either by the use of language or by the laws of thinking. For in the reasoning of Dean Mansel the absolute ultimately becomes the unmeaning.

When it is gravely argued on the footing of such an assumption and on the ground of such a definition of the absolute that a true knowledge of God is impossible because knowledge is only of the relative, this only raises a fictitious difficulty, and overlooks the real problem of knowledge. There is no problem where Dean Mansel has placed it. The distinction between absolute and relative, between infinite and finite, does not mark the boundaries between true and valid knowledge and knowledge which is only seeming. The true problem of knowledge is raised long before we can come to such distinctions and definitions. The real problem is, Can we know real things, things which have existence? If we can know these, then the question as to the extent of the object known, whether it be absolute or relative, finite or infinite, is quite irrelevant. The mystery of knowledge is one, whether our knowledge be of the "flower in the crannied wall," in which there is no question of the absolute and infinite in Dean Mansel's quantitative sense of the term, or of the Living God, the Maker of heaven and of earth. If knowledge is possible, then the question of what we know and of what we cannot know has other boundaries and distinctions than those which artificially separate the infinite from the finite.

It is curious to notice in this relation how, in the confusion of the conflict, opponents have changed swords. It is

almost incredible that we should find the sword of Spinoza in the hands of Dean Mansel, and yet the fact is so. Spinoza affirms that intellect and will in man bear no resemblance to these attributes as they are in the Deity. "Intellectus et voluntas, qui Dei essentiam constituerent, a nostro intellectu et voluntate toto cœlo differre deberent, nec in ulla re, præterquam in nomine, convenire possent; non aliter scilicet, quam inter se, conveniunt canis, cœleste signum, et canis, animal latrans" ("Ethics," Pars. I., Prop. xvii., scholium, p. 55, bi-centenary edition). It may be observed in passing that this opinion did not prevent Spinoza from building his system on the nominal resemblance between the dogstar and the dog which barks. He cut down the branch which sustained his weight. And he went on to construct a system to explain the universe, as if he had obtained some way of knowing what intellect and will could mean in the Deity apart from the only intellect and will which we do know. What those means of knowledge were, he has not explained. Not to dwell on this one among the many inconsistencies of Spinoza, we notice in it the essential features of the system of Dean Mansel. There is the assumption that when we attach the adjective infinite to any quality, by so doing we remove it from the category of known things. According to his reasoning the term infinite applied to an object renders it incomprehensible. Obviously, however, this is to use the word in its strict etymological meaning as the negation of the finite. If we have regard to the origin of the conception, and to the way in which the idea of the infinite opens out to us, we shall find that instead of being the negation of the finite, it is the fulness and consummation of it. A finite existence is one to which we can set bounds and limits; an infinite existence is simply that to the fulness

and excellence of which we can assign no limit. As of existence itself, so of the positive qualities through which existence is manifested. There is no positive quality of things which we cannot conceive of as magnified to infinitude. We can conceive of boundless strength, of endless power, and yet know that there is no change of strength in its nature, but only in its magnitude. In a similar way we can speak without contradiction of an endless series or of an infinite progress, nor does the assertion that parallel lines never meet alter the positive conception we have of parallelism.

Dean Mansel has the courage of his convictions, nor is he afraid to push his inferences to their most disastrous issue. It might be possible to avoid serious consequences to the trustworthiness of our thinking, even on Dean Mansel's theory of the conditioned, if he had found out some way of saving our moral and spiritual convictions from the wreck and ruin he has wrought. But these have to go with the others, and we are left in the sad condition of being unable to say whether those qualities of truth, righteousness, goodness, love, and mercy, which we know in human history and in human life, can be recognised by us as existing in an absolute degree and on an infinite scale. He allows us to believe in their existence. He opens a back-door, by which he seeks to bring them back after he has formally shut them out, and denied the possibility of their justification on rational grounds. When they are thus brought back, they have got a new name, and we must now call them regulative truths,—truths which may be believed and acted on, but which we cannot know. Short work is usually made of truths which stand on such a footing. Men will not be bullied into the acceptance of truths which are to be held as mere rules, and which have

previously been demonstrated to lie beyond the range of our knowledge. This distinction between regulative and speculative truth makes an absolute breach in the foundations of our knowledge, and, when pushed to the uttermost, makes the working of our intelligence to be untrustworthy.

One can see the good intention of the Dean in making this distinction. His desire was to place faith on an unassailable foundation, and the particular view of faith he sought to conserve was faith in a dogmatic revelation. The old mediæval doctrine of revelation regarded revelation as a system of truth, out of relation to the intelligence and heart of man, to be accepted on authority. This view was never overcome by Dean Mansel. Regulative truth, as defined by him, is a survival of this olden doctrine. Most theologians have now departed from it, and have come to look on revelation not as the revelation of dogmas, ready made, to be accepted under pains and penalties, but as the manifestation by the Living God of Himself to man in ways which they may apprehend and understand. When we see that Revelation mainly consists in facts which, like the facts of science, have to be classified, arranged, and interpreted, we come to the conclusion that the distinction between regulative and speculative truth formulated by Dean Mansel is as inexpedient as it is unphilosophical. The aspect of the question is changed, and we are set free from the burden of defending a revelation the essence of which is dogmatic truth of the regulative kind. We have enough to do in defending and understanding those truths and principles given us by the nature of the human mind, or given us by the nature of things, without adding other burdens, which are necessary only on a false view of the issue at stake.

Much of the confusion which undoubtedly reigns in

this discussion has arisen from the tyranny of language and the necessary use of abstract terms. We are so apt to forget when we are using such terms as power, force, cause, that we are dealing with abstractions. We must use such terms, but we can use them safely only when we remember that they are of our own creation, and do not truly stand for real things. For our own convenience, constrained thereto it may be by the conditions of the case, we speak in the form of judgment, separate subject from predicate, and a thing from its attributes; and ere we are aware of it, the separated predicates and attributes take back reality to themselves. When we think of it we at once admit that things do not consist of a substance to which attributes are externally attached, as if it could exist apart from the attributes. We see at once that a thing and its qualities are one. The unity of properties makes the thing. Here, then, is a problem essentially the same in kind with the problem which occupied the thought of Dean Mansel. It is as difficult to understand how manifoldness consists with unity, as it is to understand how finitude, relativity, and change can consist with the attributes of infinitude, absoluteness, and unchangeableness which we assign to God. It is argued that the ideas of the infinite, the absolute, and the first cause as attributes of one and the same being are mutually destructive. Similarly it might be argued, and shown in detail, were it worth while, that unity excludes manifoldness, and manifoldness is incompatible with unity: either the manifold is reduced to illusion, or the unity disappears in a plurality of oppositions. It might thus be shown that the polemic of Dean Mansel has other results than those he saw, and is destructive not of our knowledge of the absolute and infinite only, but also destructive of all true knowledge whatsoever.

But attributes are not things stuck into the substance in an external manner, like pins in a pin-cushion. On the contrary, attributes express the ways of the activity of the thing, and so incommensurable attributes may belong to the same thing, and the One may be manifold without being many. In other ways also it might be shown that the difficulties created or expounded by Dean Mansel are difficulties which belong to the nature of knowledge, and not to its extent.

We are thus again led back to the initial mystery of knowledge; and the oldest problem of speculative thought is also seen to be the newest. This is not, however, a metaphysical treatise on the possibility of knowledge, and our answer to the argumentation of the philosophy of the conditioned is complete when we have shown that the theory which limits our knowledge to the relative and the finite, when pushed to its logical conclusion, would shut out the possibility of any knowledge even of the relative and the finite. But something more may justly be said in this relation when we consider the use which Mr. Herbert Spencer has made of the philosophy of the conditioned. Mr. Spencer has resolutely shut the back door of belief by which Dean Mansel allowed the unconditioned to enter in, and continue to have an abiding influence on human conduct. He places belief and knowledge on the same footing. "Some," says Mr. Herbert Spencer, "do indeed allege that though the Ultimate Cause cannot really be thought of by us as having specified attributes, it is yet incumbent on us to assert these attributes. Though the forms of our consciousness are such that the Absolute cannot in any manner or degree be brought within them, we are nevertheless told that we must represent the Absolute to ourselves under these forms, as writes Mr. Mansel in

the work from which I have already quoted largely—'It is our duty, then, to think of God as personal; and it is our duty to believe that He is infinite.' That this is not the conclusion here adopted, needs hardly be said. If there be any meaning in the foregoing arguments, duty requires us neither to affirm nor to deny personality; our duty is to submit ourselves with all humility to the established limits of our intelligence, and not perversely to rebel against them. Let those who can believe that there is eternal war set between our intellectual faculties and our modern obligations: I for one admit no such radical vice in the constitution of things" ("First Principles," p. 108, ed. 1862). The passage which immediately follows we forbear to quote at present, as it must have a more detailed examination. Meanwhile we shall look at this statement in the light of Mr. Spencer's subsequent procedure. He had formerly said that he could not better state the fundamental principles of the Agnostic system than they were stated for him in the words of Dean Mansel. But the relation of these principles to the system which follows he evidently has not seen. He has undertaken the weighty task of bringing the inscrutable and the unknown into known and definite relations; he is bound to show how this is possible. For in his system there is nothing given or taken for granted, every fact is to be looked on as a product. The task of philosophy is to set forth the passage of the universe from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. What homogeneousness is, how we know it, and where we are to find it, is not shown or illustrated at all. Here, without apparently recognising it, Mr. Spencer is face to face with the problem which perplexed the schools of Greece. Homogeneousness and heterogeneousness is only a big way of saying the one and the many. But the bigness of

the language must not be allowed to disguise the nature of the problem. This homogeneousness seems to be at one time diffused matter, but the form it most constantly assumes in the pages of Mr. Spencer is that of persistent and unknowable force. We shall not repeat here the criticisms which have been poured on this definition by eminent physicists, from the physical point of view. They have pointed out that force is a verbal abstraction, and that energy expresses both the thought and thing.

Not to dwell on this, however, we remark that it is amusing to watch the process by which Mr. Spencer seeks to win for this inscrutable, which he names persistent force, the necessary degree of abstraction and simplicity. On the one hand he must find language sufficiently abstract to express the idea of force pure and simple, and which will not readily suggest to the reader any notion of things or of persons who exert force and can act. He is much annoyed with the concrete implications by which conservation implies something or some one who conserves, and at last he has fallen on the word persistence, being always careful to explain that this must not be understood to imply the existence of any persisting thing or person. On the other hand, the abstract persisting force must be thought of in such a way as to make it possible to enter into relations and manifest differences. Evidently Mr. Spencer must walk warily in order to be abstract enough, and yet not too abstract. This homogeneous something floats hazily before our mental vision, and all we are permitted to say to it is that it is homogeneous and nothing more. Not yet are we allowed to see in it any difference or distinction. The difficulty is continually present to the mind, How is Mr. Spencer to get the homogeneous into action? How or whence the primary differentiations are to come is a mystery;

there is no explanation of the process by which identity passes into difference. Here, then, is the same fatal rock on which the system of Spinoza made shipwreck. He could not pass from the one substance to the attributes he professes to deduce from it. Nor can Mr. Spencer pass from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, without the confession that implicitly all the differences have been there from the beginning. We repeat that this is fatal to the system of Mr. Spencer. Those who are content to take matter and its laws as given, do not feel the necessity of proving that they are evolved from the homogeneous; but Mr. Spencer has undertaken to show how the universe has passed from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and has failed at the outset. The truth is, that the homogeneous as postulated by him is a mere abstraction which has only a verbal reality.

Suppose we shut our eyes and take the leap, we find ourselves, we know not how, in the midst of distinctions and differences, such as we used to know in elementary works of natural philosophy. The indefinite has somehow become definite, and the unknowable has become manifest in known relations. The homogeneous has ceased to be homogeneous, and, in fact, never was so, and the part it had to play was simply ornamental. Mr. Spencer's problem has been changed, and has become the ordinary problem of Materialism; namely, given matter, and its laws, to account for all the forces and phenomena of the system. Mr. Spencer has strange notions of the necessity of proof, and a singular—we do not know whether to call it a singular want of knowledge of, or a singular disregard of the difficulties and perplexities which beset, the path of former workers in philosophy. He passes by and takes no account of problems which the history of philosophical thought regards as of the highest

importance, and calmly assumes, as settled by a passing allusion, propositions which the keenest thinkers of all the ages have pondered over, and regarded as insoluble. There is a statement which Mr. Spencer elevates into a law, and regards as the law which is to help his system to pass from the homogeneous. This principle he calls the instability of the homogeneous; and his method of proving the principle is peculiar. It is to be remembered that the homogeneous, according to the former demonstration of Mr. Spencer, is one and alike in every part. It represents all that is, and outside of it there is nothing. It is in stable equilibrium; and as there is nothing to interfere with it from without, there is no reason why it should not go on for ever. We are intensely desirous of finding out how Mr. Spencer gets instability into this homogeneous unity. We turn to his proof of it. We can scarcely believe our eyes when we read what is to be taken as proof and illustration. We expected a detailed analysis of the homogeneous, or, at all events, a description of the process by which difference emerges from identity. Instead of this, we begin with the mechanical definition of unstable equilibrium; and it is gravely added, that "the state of homogeneity, like the state of a stick poised on its lower end, cannot be maintained." Then follow what Mr. Spencer describes as "a few illustrations," the peculiarity of which is that they do not illustrate. The illustrations from mechanics are a pair of scales, a mass of water, a red-hot iron. Illustrations from the action of chemical forces follow, which it is not needful to notice in detail. For the fatal objection to all these illustrations is that they have no reference to the proposition which needs to be proved. The stick poised on its lower end is a stick subject to influences beyond itself, and already there is a difference between the stick and its environment. The

relevant thing would be for Mr. Spencer to show, supposing a stick as large as the universe to exist, without a possibility of being influenced from without, how internal changes might be brought to pass in that stick. For the proof and illustration of the instability of the homogeneous, Mr. Spencer has taken us among concrete realities, in which all the differences he needs are present and active. In all the vagaries of so-called reasoning, we have never seen one which so completely misses the issue as the attempted proof of the instability of the homogeneous. Indeed, the opposite of his proposition is true. Instability implies difference. The homogeneous postulated by Mr. Spencer, like the substance postulated by Spinoza, is a merely formal notion, without definite context, and can never advance beyond itself.

The truth is that there is, in the procedure of Mr. Spencer, a continual see-saw between the formal and abstract principles on which his system is professedly based and the concrete realities of every-day experience. From the most abstract to the most concrete he passes at a bound, and never seems to see or care that at any step of the process he falls into self-contradiction. A slight examination of the phrase "instability of the homogeneous," will reveal that Mr. Spencer has striven to unite two contradictory notions in the same judgment, and the laboured argumentation borrowed from Sir William Hamilton and Dean Mansel has a more direct reference to his own system of thought than it has to any other. Nor is he, even formally, consistent in the exposition of the principle of the instability of the homogeneous. Without notice it suddenly changes itself into its opposite. For we find a new principle at work: when Mr. Spencer proceeds to talk of inorganic combinations, then "the stability decreases as the complexity increases; and then when we pass to the compounds that make up organic

bodies, we find this general law still further exemplified; we find much greater complexity, and much less stability." To put this in other words, we find, then, that this general law may be put thus, "Instability varies directly as complexity, and inversely as simplicity." The more complex a combination is the more unstable. It is to be remembered that this general law occurs in proof and illustration of Mr. Spencer's more general principle of the instability of the homogeneous. Perhaps Mr. Spencer is of opinion that one way of illustrating the truth of a principle is gravely and carefully to bring forward facts which contradict it. If this be so, it casts a certain light back on the foundations of his system, and enables us to understand somewhat better the strange relation which, in the opening chapters of the first principles, the known bears to the unknowable.

A careful and critical perusal of Mr. Spencer's numerous works reveals many strange and abnormal things. We do not deny that, in relation to particular sciences, Mr. Spencer's work has been of great value. But as a philosophy or rational explanation of knowledge and experience, it is about the most curious system in the lengthened course of philosophical speculation. The transition from the unknowable to the known is a glaring *petitio principii*. Let that pass, however. The persistence of force is his great panacea, and yet he can draw no inference from it, until he surreptitiously introduces a difference and somehow gets to speak of attraction and repulsion. Then at every stage of the onward progress the differentia of each particular science are introduced, and we are gravely assured that these are explained by the persistence of force. To deny them is to deny the persistence of force. But nowhere are there shown why and how the persistence of force should have these effects and no other. Sometimes, indeed, Mr. Spencer

forgets himself and proceeds to speak like an ordinary mortal of new factors, until suddenly, when we travel onwards to the study of biology, we find that the problem has transformed itself, and the system of Mr. Spencer becomes teleological. We have a new set of terms, and a set of necessities utterly different from those we knew in the former works of Mr. Spencer. New needs arise, and nature acts with a purpose, ends are foreseen, means are provided for the end in view, and means vary and are adapted according to the necessities of each case. All these things are brought in as Mr. Spencer requires them, and have no necessary relation to the abstract principles elaborated by Mr. Spencer. What has come out in the process of nature must have somehow been first placed in it. No doubt inattentive readers, or readers who are interested only in the varied information on all sorts of subjects which abounds in the books of Mr. Spencer, will fancy that he has made good his promise of deducing all the sciences from the axiom of the persistence of force. He unquestionably says so many a time, and repeats it on every favourable occasion. Sometimes he attempts to show that all the laws of matter, and its distribution in masses, result from the persistence of force; but the attempts result in failure. For, on examination, the so-called deduction turns out to be a mere assertion that the result must have been what it is; to suppose otherwise would be to suppose force not to persist. He never gets beyond an abstract necessity, which patiently waits on the evolution of facts, and as each new series of facts emerges, contents itself with regarding it as the outcome of necessity. As far as the abstract necessity goes, any other series of facts would as well have satisfied the logical requirements of the case. But we may at once observe that mechanical laws

no more account for the distribution of matter in space, nor for the intricacies of the planetary system, than they account for the distribution of streets in a city or the sizes and styles of the houses; all these must be consistent with mechanical laws, or they will speedily disappear. On the other hand, there are elements of arbitrariness or of intelligence in them which pass beyond the scope of the laws of mechanics. We cannot do better in this connection than quote the words of one of the most thoughtful, wise, and profound of the metaphysicians of our day. We refer to the work, "Metaphysics: a Study in First Principles," by Borden P. Bowne, Professor of Metaphysics in Boston University:—

"A paragraph must be devoted to this phase of necessary evolution. It regards the forms and order of the system as a necessary outcome of the nature of matter. From the standpoint reached in the last two chapters, this view is utterly untenable, unless matter be defined in a way quite foreign to the common view. Matter conceived as a manifold of discrete elements is incapable of explaining anything without the co-operation and co-ordination of a basal one. It may be worth while, however, to allow, for the sake of argument, the self-sufficiency of matter, and inquire into the possibility of constructing the system on a purely material and mechanical basis.

"The great source of faith in such a possibility seems to be a certain misunderstanding of mechanical necessity. When the laws of motion are said to be necessary, and the laws of force are said to be fixed, the fancy is entertained that there is no room for choice or purpose, for the fixed laws make only one result possible. We shall hereafter prove that the laws themselves bear no marks of necessity; but at present we allow them to be necessary, and point out

that the necessary laws themselves determine nothing, but only when combined with certain arbitrary data. To attain any specific effect in mechanics, the necessary laws must work under peculiar conditions, which may be called the arbitrary constants of the system. Gravity is compatible with dead rest, with motion in a straight line, and with the greatest variety of orbital motions. The fact in each case is decided, not by gravity, but by the peculiar character of the arbitrary constants; in this case, by the peculiar disposition and velocity and mass of the attracting matter. The same is true for all the other general laws and forces of matter. As general they contain no account of any specific fact, but are just as compatible with any other specific fact whatever. The explanation of the peculiar outcome must be sought entirely in the arbitrary constants. It is this fact that has led to the general conviction that a mechanical explanation of an effect can never be ultimate. This is expressed by the statement that the collocations of matter can never be explained by the laws of matter, and the collocations are the chief facts to be explained. And it must be confessed that the peculiarites of the system find no explanation in the fact that it is subject to invariable or necessary mechanical laws. The peculiar forms and directions of the system find their explanation only in the arbitrary constants of the system. Mechanical necessity, therefore, is always hypothetical; the effect is necessary only on the assumed truth of the data. But the data themselves will always have an arbitrary character. It is at this point that Theism has always triumphed over mechanical Atheism. It is willing to allow that effects may be realised in nature by a system of mechanical necessity, but insists that the arbitrary constants of the system were chosen with reference to the end to be realised. When,

then, the atheist dwells upon the necessity of every event in nature, the theist points out that this alleged necessity has an arbitrary element in it which looks amazingly like choice. It is at this point that a reconciliation is possible between teleology and mechanism. Purpose may determine the arbitrary data, and mechanism may realise the purpose" (Bowne's "Metaphysics," pp. 157-8).

We refer the reader to the pages of Professor Bowne for a further luminous discussion of this subject. We can only give his conclusions, with which we cordially concur :— "A mechanical cosmology is not possible on the basis simply of matter and mechanical laws, but only on the basis of matter so arranged, and with such peculiar properties and circumstances, that, if left to itself, it must infallibly realise the present system. But these arbitrary constants, which condition the products of the fixed laws, contain the very gist of the matter, and are left unexplained. The collocations of matter are not inherent necessities of matter in general, any more than the plan of a building is inherent in its material." Again, "The present order cannot be understood as the outcome of any logical or ontological necessities. It has all the marks of contingency, in that all its circumstances might conceivably have been otherwise. Hence we know that it is the product of necessity, simply by assuming that it is so. No reflection on the formal categories of being, cause, dependence, etc., will give any insight into any of the specific features of the system. The order, then, must be assumed as an ultimate fact, of which no account can be given, or we must leave the plane of mere analogy and logical categories, and rise to the conception of intelligence and purpose" (*Op. cit*, p. 161).

In the extract quoted above, Mr. Spencer says, "Our

duty is to submit ourselves with all humility to the established limits of our intelligence and not perversely to rebel against them." We assent cordially to the spirit of the exhortation. But then we are surely entitled to ask, What are the established limits of our intelligence? We have seen that the limits set up by Dean Mansel and sanctioned by Mr. Spencer are artificial and manufactured. We have seen that Mr. Spencer himself constantly transcends these limits, and that his method is at once artificial and inconsistent. He cannot move without bringing back surreptitiously what he has previously branded as illegitimate. Nor can he pass from a simpler science to a more complex, without recognising the new factors which make the complexity of the new science. Nor can he make any progress in biology without the assumption of principles which recognise ends, adaptation, purpose. It was necessary to say so much by way of direct criticism on the method and philosophy of Mr. Spencer, because of the influence attributed to it nowadays. We have pointed out, with perhaps undue brevity, only a few of many blemishes, a few out of a number of inconsistencies in the system of Mr. Spencer. But these few suffice to show how baseless that system is, and how inadequate it is as a solution of the complex problem of human experience. If we had space to extend our criticism to his treatment of sociology and ethics, numerous other flaws might be pointed out; but this would far exceed our present limits. Our main purpose is fulfilled when we have shown that Mr. Spencer's doctrine of the persistence of force does not help us to understand in any degree the mystery of the universe. The origin, development, and progress of the universe must have a more complex cause. With his usual energy Carlyle says, "It is flatly inconceivable that

intellect, moral emotion, could have been put into us by an entity that has none of its own." This inconceivability is certainly of larger importance and better grounded in the nature of man and of things than the formal inconceivabilities manufactured by Mr. Spencer on so large a scale. Yet the truth is that the unknowable of Mr. Spencer by no means remains unknown. The formal negative becomes positive, and when he speaks of the inscrutable Power, the Power frequently ceases to be inscrutable, and becomes a known and measurable thing. It is convenient, no doubt, to have an adjective and a substantive combined after the fashion of Mr. Spencer's formula. For when hard pressed he can take refuge in the adjective, to creep out quietly in an unobserved hour, and expatiate on the known quality of power. With him, as with most other Agnostics, the main part of their system of thought is positive, and based on the positive qualities of the power which lies behind phenomena. It only becomes negative when they proceed to deny other positive features of that Power in which we live and move and have our being.

V.

THE AGNOSTICISM OF SCIENCE.

THERE is something unquestionably great and striking in the positive conception which lies at the basis of speculative science at the present time. Science has widened our thought and enlarged our conceptions of the universe. Geology has carried us back into a busy and immeasurable past, and has shown us the slow process of creation from the rudest beginnings to the highest ends. Physical science has helped our conception of the nature of the infinite, and helped our thought to get rid of the perplexities arising from an indefinite number of independent and unrelated units, by showing us that the causal energy at work in nature is one, capable, of taking many forms, yet one in essence. The doctrine of the conservation of energy helps our thought to conceive the unity of the universe in the midst of multiform manifestations. Everywhere science has assumed and has verified the conception of a great and settled order, both in the sphere of nature and in the sphere of human history; and we are beginning to get glimpses of a larger method, which will enable us to see how freedom also may largely and royally move within the bounds of law, and, by means of law, realise its glorious purpose.

We who are theists do not need to disparage the many conquests of science. For we also believe that nature is an

ordinance and a revelation of God. Nor have we any controversy with the author of "Natural Religion" in so far as he sets forth in that suggestive work the greatness of the conception which fills the mind of the earnest man of science, or the earnest artist, or the sincere lover of his kind. We have much to learn from the teaching of the writer of "Ecce Homo." While dissenting from much of what he says, and specially dissenting from the teaching which makes Nature and God one, we yet find much truth in the following paragraph:—"If we will look at things and not at words, we shall soon see that the scientific man has a theology and a God,—a most impressive theology, a most awful and glorious God. I say that man believes in a God who feels himself in the presence of a Power which is not himself, and is immeasurably above Himself,—a power in the contemplation of which he is absorbed, in the knowledge of which he finds safety and happiness. And such now is Nature to the scientific man. I do not say that it is good or satisfying to worship such a God, but I say that no class of men since the world began have ever more truly believed in a God, or more ardently or with more conviction worshipped Him. Comparing their religion in its fresh youth to the present confused forms of Christianity, we think a bystander would say that though Christianity had in it something far higher and deeper and more ennobling, yet the average scientific man worships just at present a more awful, and, as it were, a greater Deity than the average Christian. In so many Christians the idea of God has been degraded by childish and little-minded teaching; the Eternal and the Infinite and the All-embracing has been represented as the head of the clerical interest, as a sort of clergyman, as a sort of schoolmaster, as a sort of philanthropist. But the scientific man *knows* him to be eternal;

in astronomy, in geology, he becomes familiar with the countless millenniums of His lifetime. The scientific man strains his mind actually to realise God's infinity. As far off as the fixed stars he traces Him, 'distance inexpressible of numbers that have names.' Meanwhile, to the theologian, infinity and eternity are very much of empty words when applied to the Object of his worship. He does not realise them in definite facts and definite computations."

'But it is not merely because he realises a stupendous power that I call the scientific man a theist. A true theist should recognise this Deity as giving him the law to which his life is to be conformed. Now here it is that the resemblance of modern science to theology comes out most manifestly. There is no stronger conviction in this age than the conviction of the scientific man that all happiness depends upon the knowledge of the laws of nature and the careful adaptation of human life to them" ("Natural Religion," pp. 19, 20). We gladly acknowledge that there is much truth in what has been said so powerfully in this and other paragraphs by the author of "Natural Religion;" we acknowledge that the tribute he has paid to the belief and conduct of scientific men is true of many of them. Their creed is a lofty one, no doubt, and their earnestness is undeniable. This is of itself a great gain, and a great advance in many ways on the creed of science in former times. We would that Theists and Christians were as earnest and sincere in the larger, truer creed they do profess. But while we acknowledge the earnestness, the sincerity, and the love of truth purely and passionately manifested by many men of science, we have to inquire if they are not themselves better than the creed they profess, and better than the object they worship, as the creed and the object of worship are set forth for them by the author of "Natural Religion"?

The true and the right and the beautiful,—are these to be found in the object which the scientific man worships? Let us accept all he says about nature, and ask when we stop short at nature, Have we any right to say that we have reached the true, the right, and the beautiful? Let us follow in the footsteps of science for a little, until we gather some of the implications and suggestions which make up the conception of that power "in the knowledge of whose ways alone is safety and well-being, in the contemplation of which they find a beatific vision." Is it possible apart from a goal and purpose not yet reached to find a beatific vision in the contemplation of Nature? Taking Nature alone, taking the present as the outcome of the past, and adding whatsoever scientific foresight may discern as the promise of the future, up to the time when the degradation of energy finds its result in the dead level of temperature which will make movement and life impossible, we ask, Is the gain worth the struggle? Does the outcome justify the means by which it has been accomplished? Evolution is and must be optimist; but on the scientific view of nature is it possible to escape pessimism? For the outcome we now see has been the result of endless, unceasing, abiding struggle. For the beginning of the story which science has to tell us lies in movement and convulsion: a fiery vapour fills all space; it pictures for us the whirl and crash of atoms in the elemental warfare of perpetual collision. Molecules of matter seek to coalesce in definite masses, only to be broken up anew and pass into other forms, until by loss of heat they settle down into solid bulk and shape. This has no sooner happened, and a solid crust been formed, than the conflict begins anew. The uncooled masses, pressed beneath the superincumbent weight of the solid crust, presses back in turn, upheaves, breaks asunder, and tortures

into strange shapes what has already won some measure of consistency and hardness. The conflict and collision continue until around the sun there are differentiated masses of matter, in all of which the struggle goes on anew; out of the physical chaos emerges some form of order, until we reach the time when an atmosphere surrounds the earth and on it have been formed mountain and river, sea and land. The earth is fit for life.

Life comes somehow; but with life comes a keener and a fiercer struggle,—a struggle of all life with the conditions of life, an internecine warfare of life among living creatures themselves. Life advances, ebbing and flowing under the conditions with which it struggles. Sometimes it has to pass through the coldness of an ice age, before which life recedes; sometimes vast floods sweep over the globe, and many forms of life disappear. Myriad kinds of life appear, and are born only to perish. Thousands and millions of insects are born every day, and perish with the day. In every sphere we find overcrowding and pushing and stirring, and everywhere the weakest go to the wall; and the stronger is tearing, stamping out, and destroying the weaker. Every individual and every race, in the desire of self-preservation, takes advantage of every subterfuge, makes the most of every accidental gain, until we, as we look in at the picture which science has painted for our vision, are filled with horror and amazement. Everywhere the same law of destruction and the same endless struggle for existence.

The weaker races disappear and the fittest survive! new races emerge with keener senses, a quicker vision, stronger in beak and claw, swifter in flight, more cunning in subterfuge and combination, and these have gotten them the victory and have become the winners in life's race. In this

conflict science shows us the victory and supremacy of man. Man has been the most subtle of the beasts of the field. In this game of sneaking and snatching, of crushing and grinding, of writhing, struggling, and pushing, man has been more cunning than his companions, and has succeeded. Among the myriad forms which life has assumed, this vertebrate form has proved itself the most cunning of the innumerable subterfuges which life has contrived; this subterfuge of sense and intelligence has been proved to be the most successful, and this combination we call man has become the last and greatest of the combinations of life. For on the view we are now considering, all the gifts which distinguish man from other forms of life are only so many contrivances for the advantage of the individual or of the race. Sense is the sentry which life has placed on guard; observation is the watch it keeps on its enemies,—a means of discovering their ways of action, and so win or keep advantage; knowledge is great and valuable as it finds or invents ever new weapons for the warfare; memory keeps count of the past, and stores up the remembrance of former perils and victories for future use; and foresight is valuable inasmuch as it helps to make future combinations available before they are needed. As of the physical and mental attributes of man, so also of those qualities which we call moral. Truth is only the vantage ground which the stronger seeks to keep, in order to make the weaker still more weak by depriving them of all those subterfuges, mimicry, and lying, which are the natural resources of weakness. Right and wrong, too, must, on the other hand, be regarded as rules of the game, rules of the road, which the weak desire the strong to observe that they may struggle with the more advantage. In the light of the evolution theory of morals, all the faculties of man, all the personal and social virtues,

must be regarded as contrivances in order to struggle with advantage, and are become only so many weapons by which the game may be won.

Nor is the matter mended when we allow the author of "Natural Religion" to say: "We are concerned here with Nature as opposed to that which is above Nature, not with Nature as opposed to man. We use it as a name comprehending all the laws of the universe as known in our experience, and excluding such laws as are inferred from experience so exceptional and isolated as to be difficult of verification. In this sense, Nature is not heartless or unrelenting; to say so would be equivalent to saying that pity and forgiveness are in all cases supernatural. It may be true that the law of gravitation is pitiless, that it will destroy the most innocent and amiable person with as little hesitation as the wrong-doer. But there are other laws which are not pitiless. There are laws under which human beings form themselves into communities, and set up courts in which the claims of individuals are weighed with careful skill. These are laws under which Churches and philanthropists are formed, under which misery is sought out and relieved, and every evil that can be discovered in the world is redressed. Nature, in the sense in which we are now using the word, includes her necessity, and therefore, so far from being pitiless, includes all the pity that belongs to the whole human family, and all the pity they have accumulated in and, as it were, capitalised in institutions, political, social, and ecclesiastical, through countless generations" ("Natural Religion," p. 68). By the supposition that "Nature, including humanity, would be our God," it is thought that the charge of mercilessness may be obviated. The character of the God of the scientific man might be read in the pity, sympathy, and love of man, as

well as in the earthquake and the storm. If, however, we are to say those who believe in Nature only still believe in a God who "has so much of personality that He takes account of the distinction of virtue and vice, that He punishes crime and that He relieves distress," we have to ask, How does the author of "Natural Religion" make his statement good? For on this view what are virtue and vice? We cannot forget that the author has formerly said, "Mind and matter, duties and rights, morality and expediency, honour and interest, virtue and vice—all these words which seemed once to express elementary and certain realities, now strike us as just the words which, thrown into the scientific crucible, might dissolve at once" (p. 8). Looked at in the light of the scientific method, in its negative aspect at least, they have been dissolved, and yet they appear again fresh and vigorous, reborn from the crucible, when the argument requires that the God of science should have so much personality as to take account of the distinction of virtue and vice. It is not possible, even for this distinguished writer, both to eat his cake and to have it. He must really take one side of the alternative or the other. Nor has he much choice in the matter. He must elect to stand by the scientific method, and regard virtue and vice simply as disguised forms of strength and weakness, conditions set to life by the struggle for existence.

The author of "Natural Religion" cannot be allowed to make selections from the qualities of human nature, in order to find in Nature a "God who punishes crime and relieves distress." For on this view He also must make the crime and impose the distress. And the crime is really as virtuous as the punishment. For here in the light of science moral distinctions have vanished, and all that is

left are the contrivances which make for vigour and strength. It is hardly necessary for us to refer to the history of the human family. But a brief reference may not be uninstructive, if we are to have an adequate conception of the gain to the scientific conception of God which has been obtained by including humanity in nature. What do we find in history? We find carnage, strife, and struggle everywhere. It is a roll written within and without with weeping, lamentation, and woe. Even where history has no written record, and has left only the antiquarian relics of a pre-historic time, we distinguish the periods, otherwise unknown, by the names of the material of which their weapons of war were made. When history becomes conscious of itself, its earliest stories are stories of oppression and cruelty on the one hand, suffering and sorrow on the other. In Assyria, Chaldæa, and Egypt, in Palestine, Greece, and Rome, as one by one the empires of the world rise, flourish, and decay, as they pass in review they only add to the long roll of carnage, bloodshed, and crime,—a fit sequel, on the scientific view, of that struggle among the races which partly ended in the supremacy of man.

Modern history is quite as full of carnage. Take the story of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire as told by Gibbon,—take the story of the Holy Roman Empire as told by Bryce, or the story of the making of England as told by Green, or any other history which describes the rise of the European system and the present state of the nations of Europe, and we shall find few traces of the power which punishes crime or relieves distress. Every nation in Europe is armed to the teeth, and is constantly on the watch. And the armed men of Europe are counted by millions. The nations seem on the borders of a warfare

which shall dwarf all other wars which the world has ever seen. The next war will likely be a war of races.

Nor does hope seem any brighter when we look at the internal condition of any particular nation. A formal political economy has justified fierce competition as the right rule of trade, and the ethics which is professedly based on science has taken as its fundamental principle of action the avoidance of pain and the culture of pleasure. Men have massed themselves into large cities, the miseries, inequalities, and cries of which have grown to an unsurpassed height. The accumulation of wealth is greater, and the wretchedness of poverty more intense, until poverty is becoming vocal, and the next war within each nation is likely to be a war of class against class.

What message has the God of science, as He is defined by the author of "Natural Religion," to the mass of men who are in the state we have briefly described? The old notions which guided the lives of men are, we must remember, in the scientific crucible, and, when they have been re-cast, must obtain a new meaning. Conscience, duty, love, stood for something great and good in former times. Now they tend to pass into illusions, which the cunning of Nature has cast over the minds of men. We in our turn have become cunning, and have read the riddle of Nature, and laid bare her secret. Now we are able to see that pity, sympathy, and love are only Nature's ways of increasing the cohesion of society, and making united men more powerful to resist the disintegrating forces with which they have to struggle. Selfishness has put on an altruistic garb, but it has not changed its character or its aim. By the union of individuals in a society, by binding them together in a larger bundle, the gain has been great. Intelligence has been quickened, reason has made large

strides, and many social emotions have got names, which many believe to be true and valid, and to represent great realities. But the scientific method has overthrown the fond illusion, and we are left face to face with the sad reality that all these reasons which thrilled us with great emotions, and roused us to self-forgetfulness, are only chronic disguises of the selfish instincts, and nothing else but the contrivance of Nature for the perpetuation of the race which is fittest for the struggle. We find that in this relation our work has been done for us, better than we can do it for ourselves, and we transfer the picture from the pages of Mr. Courtney to our own. Mr. Courtney is speaking of the scientific moral man, the last and highest product of evolution. "He was an ape, he is a man, he will be dust; he raised himself by well calculated selfishness; he maintains himself by an equally well calculated altruism. What is to guide him in his present state? That which has all along guided him,—the preference of pleasure to pain. His reason is granted him to enable him to be more successfully happy, and to help others to secure their happiness so long as they do not interfere with his own. He is first and foremost an animal, then he is an animal blessed (or cursed, according to the pessimists) with consciousness; lastly, he is a social animal. His consciousness raises him from the μονόχρονος ἡδονή, the short-lived satisfactions of the animal; his sociability enables him to combine devotion to his kind with devotion to himself, to solve somehow the contradiction between altruism and egoism. Personal immortality he does not of course possess: his body is resolved into the elements whence it has been slowly evolved. Nor yet is his spirit absorbed into some vast impersonal spirit; that is a metaphysical delusion; there is no such opposition between body and spirit as older

philosophers supposed. But if he lives on at all, it is in the life of human beings who come after him, and that only in virtue of certain social cosmopolitan acts by which he has enriched society at large. And if we ask what a right act or a moral act means in contrast with a wrong and immoral act, the answer is clear. A right act in the long resort must be defined as one which is in accordance with that systematic action by which man, as he is now, was evolved. That is to say, a right act is a natural act, guided by the reason which grasps at chances of pleasure and success, self-perpetuation and longevity. A right act is first and foremost a natural act, one done in obedience to the promptings of nature; only nature in the largest sense, the nature of man as a conscious, selfish, social animal. If, too, we may trust Mr. Herbert Spencer, who, like most evolutionists, is and must be optimist, in the course of time the right act becomes easier and easier. 'Not he who believes that adaptation will increase is absurd, but he who doubts that it will increase is absurd,' he says with the solemnity of a man who is quoting some text of Scripture. 'Pleasure will eventually accompany every mode of action demanded by social conditions.' And then the millennium, when the evolved man is as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove, a marvellous compound of selfishness and unselfishness, whose animality is cunningly blended with his benevolent sociality" ("Studies in Philosophy," by W. L. Courtney, pp. 131-3).

At the furthest goal of history and of progress we see this smug, selfish altruist, who has got his modes of action to correspond to social conditions, and finds his pleasure therein. The vision is not beatific. But what hope is there of its accomplishment, before the sun grows cold and the earth unfit for life? for we cannot allow the optimistic

picture to shut our eyes to the ugly facts which meet us everywhere. When the author of "Natural Religion," in the passage quoted above, speaks of the pity capitalized in institutions, and of the mercy and pity of the whole human race, we must not forget that there is another side to the picture. The poor as much as the rich are the product of evolution, and the condition of the poor grows more appalling year by year. Down in the courts, in the back lanes and streets of our cities, not a hundred yards from palatial residences, children are born, and grow up under fearful conditions. They do not get a glimpse of what goodness and purity mean. It is not possible for them to know good from evil, nor right from wrong. Some are systematically trained to crime, and in them are developed to a new keenness all the savage instincts of selfishness. Pressed down, trodden on, crushed on every side, they turn with terrible ferocity on their oppressors, and around us on every side are elements of greater barbarism than the ancient world had ever known. The people who have been crowded together, to herd as they can, have no opportunity of learning better things,—will evolution ever change the conditions which bind these millions of poor wretches to their misery, and which do more to develop anti-social instincts than we can well conceive? Nay, they are themselves, they and their condition, the product of evolution; nor is there any hope of progress for the race in the vision set before us in the pages of "Natural Religion."

We can understand how the sight of the misery of man, and the contemplation of the hopeless condition of so many millions, should drive men to the despair of unbelief. This keen feeling of the misery of man lies at the root of the revolutionary tendencies of our times. Intense sympathy with men of sorrow and misery has become bitter hatred of

oppression; and if the social conditions which have made it possible for millions of the human family to live lives of degradation and misery, without hope or love to shed one ray of brightness on their hapless lot, cannot be changed,—if human life be not better in the future than it has been in the past,—if there be no hope of immortality nor any prospect beyond the present life, who shall be bold enough to say that the existence of the world and of the people upon it is justified?

If we are to judge fairly of the character of the substitute for God which has been depicted for us in the pages of "Natural Religion," we must have regard not only to the pity and the piety of some peoples, but also to the state of humanity as a whole. When we look at the sad facts of human life, and steadfastly regard the fearful history of the past, we cannot have much hope for the future. It is no wonder, though, that men should despair, when they find themselves to be much better, more kind, and more loving and more virtuous than the only God which science allows them to retain in their knowledge. Nature, including humanity, is their only God; and if they who are thus shut from the faith of their fathers, are educated Englishmen of the nineteenth century, we need not be surprised that the result is pessimism of the darkest colour. To act as the positivists do—select as the representatives of humanity only those who are best and bravest, purest, most wise, upright, and thoughtful of the sons of men—or to hint at the sympathy and pity to be found in the whole human family, as the author of "Natural Religion" has done, is altogether illegitimate. On what principles and by what right do they leave out of account all the darker elements of human life? A view which would justify the existence of the world as rational, and good in the final result, must take account of all

the facts, and must not make an arbitrary selection from them.

Formerly we have seen that the scientific view is unable to give a rational account of the origin of things: now we have by the course of our argument been brought to ask whether the goal and consummation of things foreshadowed by scientific speculation are sufficient to justify the process by which they have been reached. If we accept the views expressed in "Natural Religion," we must give a negative answer. For one of the surest prophecies of science is the prophecy of the approach of the time when the human race must perish from the earth. All its achievements must also vanish. The organic structure of man wrought out through countless ages, the intelligence evoked at so much cost, the moral gain won through suffering,—art, science and literature, religion and its glory, vanish with the vanishing race of man, and leave no trace behind! Let us look at this picture painted by the hand of one who sees in man nothing but the outcome of natural forces. Here is a description from the pen of Dr. Maudsley, which we may place over against the picture drawn by Mr. Spencer. Dr. Maudsley is speaking of humanity as it increases in age and retrogrades in nature. "It will not, in fact, reproduce savages with the simple mental qualities of children, but new and degenerate varieties, with special repulsive characters, and savages of a decomposing civilization, as we might call them, who will be ten times more vicious and noxious, and infinitely less capable of improvement than the savages of a primitive barbarism; social disintegrants of the worst kind, because bred of the corruption of the best organic developments, with natures and properties virulently anti-social" ("Body and Will," p. 321). "If the force at the back of all becoming on earth is that which the sun has

steadily supplied to it through countless ages, and still steadily supplies, it is plain that when it fails, as fail it one day must, there will be a steadily declining development and a rapidly increasing degeneration of things,—an undoing by regressive decomposition of what has been done by progressive combinations through the succession of the ages. The nations that have risen high in complexity of development will degenerate and be broken up, to have their places taken by less complex associations of inferior individuals; they in turn will yield place to simpler and feebler unions of still more degraded beings. A few scattered families of degraded human beings, living perhaps in snow huts near the equator, very much as the Esquimaux live near the Pole, will represent the last wave of the receding tide of human existence before its final extinction, until at last a frozen earth, incapable of cultivation, is left without energy to produce a living particle of any sort, and death itself is dead" (Maudsley, "Body and Will," p. 320). Truly on this view, life

> "Is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

Evidently the contemplation of the Power revealed by science can give us no abiding beatific vision. For it is obvious, on reflection, that in Nature taken alone, or in Nature including humanity, we do not find those deeper distinctions of good and evil, of right and wrong, on the acknowledgment of which social life depends. On the view set forth in "Natural Religion," these distinctions have no corresponding reality in the nature of things. Nor is it possible to maintain the existence and validity of these distinctions apart from the distinction between God and nature on which they are founded.

But the question may fairly be put to Theists, Do not the same difficulties meet us in the theistic view? If nature is an ordinance of God and a revelation of His truth, does it help us to solve the problem of moral evil, when we say that God is separate from nature and above nature? Perhaps not. Perhaps the solution of the problem of evil lies beyond our power. But by holding fast to the Theistic position we save for ourselves the persuasion that goodness, righteousness, and truth lie at the root and centre of things, that love and mercy are true qualities of the Maker of the universe. When we identify God with the sum of things, we must attribute to Him without distinction all the qualities we find in the universe; and we can have no good ground for saying that sin and crime are less justified in the nature of things than goodness, righteousness, and truth.

By holding fast to the Theistic view, and by steadfastly holding to the conviction that the Maker and Ruler of the world is right, we certainly do not get rid of the problem of evil, but we shift its bearings. We can recognize that evil exists, without permitting the admission of the fact to overturn the moral foundations of the universe. Having always the conviction that goodness, righteousness, and truth are firmly and everlastingly fixed in the nature and being of God, we can patiently inquire into the problem of evil, and seek for reasons to explain its meaning and its purpose. Taking for granted the Theistic position, we ask again the question put at the beginning of this chapter, Is there any justification for the suffering of the world? and we can give an answer full of hope. We saw that, on the scientific view, life is a hopeless and an aimless thing. The cost of the movement of life, organic, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, is lost, vanished into death, both the death of the individual and of the race. On the other hand, let us but

be permitted to see as the goal and purpose of the intense conflict going on now, and which has been going on through all the past, a consummation large and great enough to justify it, and we shall be reconciled in fact and in thought to the laws of life as those now are. We shall see that the struggle for existence is God's way of making the creatures make themselves. In our view of it, conscious life is worth all the cost of the struggle which went on before consciousness began to be. Moral life also is worth all the cost of the suffering by which it has been obtained; but only on the condition that the gain is a permanent gain, and that there is no turning back of the shadow on the dial. Let us have the hope of a goal and the sure promise of fulfilment, and we can justify the ways of God to man, and reconcile in thought the fact of a suffering world with the goodness of God. We can read over again the record of the endless struggle of creation, as science has unveiled it to us, and read it now to higher ends and uses than Dr. Maudsley will allow us to perceive. We see that it is through the struggle and conflict and sacrifice of the lower that the higher has been evolved. We see that out of all of the rude beginnings of sensation the glorious web of rational thought has been woven; that out of the feelings of self-preservation and the desire for the propagation of the race, the moral duties, love, mercy, and self-sacrifice, have grown; and this without conscious desire on the part of living things themselves. As the ages pass on, however, these unconscious forces become conscious, moral, and rational; moral duties arise in all their breadth and grandeur before the eyes of men. Life has become, through its long struggle and its wearisome learning, fit to bear the strain of the consciousness of a higher life. Life turns upward to seek the author of it, and God had waited,—shall I venture to say it?—with intense

desire for the moment when created life could hear and see Him.

Not yet, however, can there be uninterrupted fellowship with God. Nor can creation yet unite with the Creator; there must be a new training, a new kind of sorrow, and a new kind of suffering, until moral life should freely learn to choose the otherness of self and to become one in abiding fellowship with God. At this point, then, we see the union of Creator and creature, and the Creator stooping down to meet the aspirations of created life,—to meet those aspirations which He had implanted in them by the long career of striving after Him and of suffering by which they learnt to climb upwards to higher things. By the long process of suffering and of gain won through suffering, human nature, the crown of created life, has become fit for the reception of God; not merely able to receive the word of God, not only to be capable in some measure of knowing and of loving God, but able to receive God Incarnate in the flesh. And God indeed dwelt with man on the earth.

Then began a new moral and spiritual movement, by which we are enabled to understand that the Living God did not disregard nor was indifferent to the sufferings of His creation. For the suffering was His way of making the moral world and of creating His spiritual world. In the Incarnate God we see suffering and sorrow by deliberate resolution freely chosen, and taken home to Himself. With conscious freedom Christ Jesus came to save others and to lose Himself, to give Himself for others. What had been forced on others from without, by the laws of life and by the conditions of existence, He freely chose as the one way by which life could enter into conscious living fellowship with Him who is the Lord of life. Let it be understood that we are speaking now only of one aspect of the work

and of the cosmical relations of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We should like it to be borne in mind, that we have in view all the fuller relations of His work to the race of man, to the sin of the world, and His relation also to the manifestation and revelation of the Living God to man. But of these we have no space and no call to speak at the present time. What we wish to insist on here and now is the light which the sufferings of the Man of sorrows casts on the travailing of the groaning creation, constrained to struggle upward to the light. The groaning creation is met by the Maker of it, Who enters into its suffering, meets its sorrow, shares its groaning and its agony, and lifts it up into the sacred circle of divine life.

But suffering and sorrow as shared and endured by the Man Christ Jesus have been transformed and transfigured by the light of Heaven. In Him, and as endured by Him, suffering and sorrow have become voluntary, deliberately chosen, and chosen for great and adequate ends. They are set free

* It is difficult, without cumbering the argument unduly, to bring out all that is implied in it. But we may say in a foot-note that, as the reader has, no doubt, observed, there has been no allusion made to the great doctrine of the fall of man; we have allowed the statement of the struggle of man after light and love and purity to follow without interruption on the statement of the struggle for existence depicted for us by science. Still, if there were time for the exposition, there is room for the doctrine, and it may be held in consistency with the argument of the chapter. For the doctrine of the fall is the expression of man's former unfitness for his high calling, and of the necessity for a further trial and struggle with conditions of a different kind, ere he could fulfil God's great purpose. In another view also it gives expression to the great truth that man or the creation unaided could not attain to fellowship with the Creator; so the statement of the text is not to be treated as if it utterly ignored the fall of man; nor is the statement regarding the work of Christ to be read as if it was expressed in any fulness. We have taken as much of the doctrine regarding man and regarding the Redeemer as we needed in the present relation.

from self-seeking; free also from the nearer gain to the individual, the nation, or to the race, on which all other people had set their hearts. For the suffering was undertaken and the sorrow borne by Him with the view of lifting the children of men into abiding fellowship with God. As borne by Him, the sorrows of sinful and imperfect beings, —sorrows which came on other people through their sins and their mistakes, and as the result of their shortsightedness and folly, have become the outward signs of a compassion, sympathy, and love which pass knowledge. Through Him we learn that the moral heroism, the calm resolve to suffer and to work, the sympathy with sorrow, which we have known and admired in human history, have their home in the heart of the Maker of the universe.

Seen in the light of Christ's life and teaching, the dreary picture drawn by Dr. Maudsley loses its horror and its gloom. It has no new terror to the thought of the Theist. For when considered rightly, it only transfers to the race what we have always known to be true of the individual. The faith and the thought which have overcome the thought of death and annihilation of any man is quite adequate to win the victory over the thought of death as applied to all men. It is indeed fatal to the optimism of the Positivist; fatal also to any optimism which leaves God and immortality out of account; and utterly ruinous to that religion set forth in "Natural Religion" as the religion of the scientific man. In the Christian view, the gain won through suffering is not lost. The moral and spiritual results are only transferred to another sphere fitted to new conditions, and set free for a larger and wider development to glorious issues yet unknown.

Nor is it necessary to allow the sad outlook of the dark picture drawn by Dr. Maudsley to obtain too large a dominion

over us. It has been a familiar thought to Christian Theology, while science was yet in its infancy, that the present system of things must have an end. But the on-coming of that catastrophe did not prevent them from going forth to make the world new. The Christian fathers had a sure and certain hope—a knowledge of God, of His will, and of His purpose, which led them to act and labour for the regeneration of the world. In the light of that knowledge they lived and spoke and worked, and in their own lives at least kept a clear space where righteousness, truth, and love should dwell. Nor is there anything in the ascertained results of science contradictory of that hope. When we keep firm and fast our faith in and knowledge of the Living God, the long progress of the race is seen to have a purpose and a goal. What has already been won is the earnest of what yet shall be. Although it is sadly true that sin and crime abound still, and the waifs and strays on our streets rise up in judgment to condemn us, it is also true that the number of loving, righteous, and unselfish men and women on the earth is greater to-day than ever before in the world's history. We have learned that the races of high morality are foremost in the world to-day ; and those are the strongest who are also the most benevolent ; keenest, and quickest in sympathy, whose love of purity, justice, and truth is most fervent and vivid. We have learned also that all forms of selfishness weaken in the long run, that vice saps strength, that injustice, violence, hate, and lust tend to weaken, to destroy, and to disorganise.

This was, however, by no means a self-evident proposition. It was by no means obvious that self-denial, sympathy, and trust were stronger in the long run than self-assertion, suspicion, and mistrust. In order to the establishment of this truth, in such a way and by such experiments as science could

recognise, it was necessary that this way of living should be tried by a sufficient number of people, and for a sufficient length of time. Experience could not predict its success before experience began to know the good results which followed on sympathy and love in active exercise among men. It is a matter of plain historical fact, which can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of all competent people, that the first great trial of the way of sympathy and love and of bearing one another's burdens was made in connection with the work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and with the beginning of the Christian Church. He went about doing good; and He was able to persuade men to accept His example as the highest ideal of human life. He stated anew for men the golden rule, that "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye so unto them." But He gave them a higher rule than even this; He gave them a new measure of duty, of love, of self-sacrifice: "Love one another as I have loved you." He and His apostles and His followers persuaded men to try this more excellent way; enabled them to outgrow the old way of exacting an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, of self-assertion and resentment of injuries for a new way of meekness, of returning good for evil, of forgiveness of injuries. Through these Christian people a new standard of heroism came into the world. And as the ages passed on, the new proved itself to be the stronger and the more vigorous. However imperfectly the new aim was realised, and however great was the interval of short-coming between the pattern and the copy, enough was accomplished during these eighteen hundred years to make it possible for science to come to the new conclusion that, on the whole, selfishness was the weaker and sympathy the stronger power. Apart from the history of Christianity there are no data on which to base

this ethical law. Nay, apart from Christianity we have no reason to suppose that the stern love of truth which is the great characteristic of the man of science would have been his. The truthful races, or rather we should say the most truthful races, are those who have been emancipated by the spirit of Christianity; and the love of truth for its own sake is a distinctly Christian virtue, and may be historically shown to be such.

We observe, too, as a matter of history, as the outcome of the power and influence of Jesus Christ on men, a new passion in man for the relief of suffering. Pity became active, and found vent in seeking out and relieving the sufferings of those forgotten by the world. The followers of Christ, wherever they went, cared for men and women, overlooked all distinctions of race and class, and filled the hearts of men with the thought of a new brotherhood. It is not necessary to write much on this topic; we may refer to it as a notorious fact of history, and for the purpose of showing that, seeing what has already been accomplished, we need not despair of making this world a world of righteousness and peace. When we shall gather courage to live up to the Christian ideal; when we shall come to look on war as a relic of unchristian times; when we shall cease to regard fierce and selfish competition as the only legitimate rule of trade; when we shall regard holiness and not pleasure or happiness as the end of life; when the rich man shall begin to impose a limit on the accumulated gains of capital, and regard all above a certain limit as goods held in trust for the help of others, or for the advance of science, culture, and religion; when, in short, a nation shall have the courage and the faith to allow the teaching, the power, and the spirit of Christianity to have fair play,—then we shall make such an assault on the vice and sin and disorganizing

forces of society, as will issue in a progress undreamed of yet in the highest moment and most exalted moods of the greatest lover of his kind.

Our aim in this chapter has been to show, that if we are to keep possession of the knowledge of a power beyond ourselves which the Agnostic allows us to have, we must go beyond the Agnostic position. If we have any rational understanding of nature, any hope of vindicating the laws of life as good in the final outcome, any stimulus to right the wrongs, relieve the sufferings, and better the condition of men, we must get beyond nature and humanity, and reach up to the Living God, in whom we live and move and have our being. We have got so far as to have shown that, on rational grounds, if we are to have an intelligent view of the world; on moral grounds, if we are to have a sufficient explanation of the sufferings of the world; on practical grounds, if we are to have strength for living and for working to-day,—on all these grounds the Theistic position is absolutely necessary. Without God, no true knowledge, no moral life, no abiding work is possible for man.

VI.

THE SEARCH AFTER GOD.

THE Substitute for God described with such graphic power in the pages of "Natural Religion," and the attitude of the scientific mind towards that Power, which is described as worship, are not without parallels in the history of religious thought and practice. A close parallel may be found in the worship of earthly sovereignty, which, beginning in the time of Augustus, culminated in the claim of Domitian to be called "Our Lord and God." * The Roman Empire was then the supreme world-power. The arms of Rome had carried its dominion far and wide around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. From Britain to Persia, from Egypt to the centre of Germany, nations and powers were subject to the Roman sway. The visible presence and felt power of Rome, the equal laws and rights of all Roman citizens, the care which Rome bestowed on all her provinces, and the right of an appeal to Rome which was the birthright of every citizen, were ways by which the supreme power, majesty, and justice of Rome were brought home to the imagination of the people. The state was the symbol of what was permanent, sovereign, and good; and

* "Dominus et Deus noster hoc fieri jubet. Unde institutum posthac, ut ne scripto quidem ac sermone cujusquam appelaretur aliter" (Suetonius, Domit. C. 13. Quoted in Schaff's Church History, vol. ii., p. 427).

the emperor was the state. He was the embodiment of triumphant force. When, therefore, the visible world is the measure and the limit of hope and aspiration, the most conspicuous and most powerful of the forces of the world will form the object of worship.

The advance of Rome also, and her supremacy over different peoples, had brought into prominence before the minds of the people the inadequate nature of polytheism, and its powerlessness to satisfy the religious need. The tribal gods were dwarfed in the presence of the Roman power. It was needed to have gods more universal, more abstract; and the more abstract they became, the more were they removed from the minds and thoughts of men. It is necessary for man that the power he worships shall be a power present, operative, and real. The Roman Empire, embodied in the Roman sovereign, was visible, real, and powerful. Nor was the transition great from the worship of the mythological gods to the worship of the Roman emperor. The objects of worship were on the same plane, and not greatly different in nature. From the decay of faith in the gods of Rome and Greece, and from the visibility and dominance of the emperor, it came to pass that the worship of success and power became a fact in the first centuries of Rome's existence as an empire.

For Rome read science, and we shall have a pretty accurate account of the natural history of the system which has found its highest literary expression in "Natural Religion." The conquests of science during the last few centuries have been like the conquest of Rome, great, rapid, and comprehensive. Now and then science, like a Roman general, celebrates its triumphs, and leads forth in review the trophies of its victory. Physical science, from the time of Newton onwards, has gone forth conquering and to conquer,

and within the last half-century its triumphs have increased in a geometrical ratio. The natural sciences also have made vast strides, and they are confident that soon they will have full possession of the field. Year by year conquerors of science meet, to tell their tale of progress, to map out new work for the coming years, and to utter songs of triumph over enemies defeated and slain. We need not be surprised that, intoxicated with success, men of science have become idolaters of the only power known to them, nor that a man of supreme literary gifts should come forth to show that this Power which science knows is a supreme and awful object of adoration. It is the adoration of success, the culmination of a worship lower in nature and development than the hero-worship of primeval times. Domitian, too, may have had his laureate, and orations may have been spoken in his time, setting forth the greatness and awfulness of the Roman state embodied in the Roman emperor, as eloquent in form, as touching in pathos, and as lofty in aspiration as are the pages of "Natural Religion." And with as good a right. For the Roman Empire, with its equal laws and supreme dominion and majestic justice, was as good an embodiment of visible power as it was possible to have. If the visible world be all, then the worship of the Roman state was justified.

But the Roman power and the Roman worship neglected to take account of forces lying deeper than the visible world. At the time when idolatrous worship assumed its highest and purest form, and the worship of the state had become a system, One was born into the world who was destined to work a mighty revolution in men's way of thinking, and to re-instate the unseen and the eternal in more than their ancient glory. The Empire of Rome had won a consolidated shape. It was supreme. The commands of

the emperor were obeyed to the utmost limits of the empire. The vanquished were spared, and the proud were subdued, and the master of many legions seemed to sit secure, while the religious instincts might seem, and did seem to many, to have abundant scope and satisfaction in the worship of the state embodied in the emperor. In a distant province of the empire, among a set of people hated and despised by their neighbours, one appeared with no visible power on His side, with no weapons in His hand, with no parade of learning, and in a few years He and His followers were able to overthrow the gigantic system of the Roman Empire. There could be no greater contrast than there was between Jesus of Nazareth and the emperor who sat on the throne of Rome. The emperor was obeyed, feared, and worshipped; thousands waited to do his bidding. Jesus of Nazareth stood solitary and alone. He called a few working men to be His companions and His followers. They seemed to be poor scholars for a work of a kind so great as that which the Master had in view. He walked with them and talked with them for a few years, and then at Jerusalem He suffered and He died. His life was passed in deepest obscurity; His appeal was to that which is purest, highest, noblest in man: no base motives nor selfish aims were to be allowed among His followers. He spoke to the poor, the outcast, and the degraded, and He was able to awaken them to sympathy, love, and power. He spoke of things unseen and eternal, taught His followers to know the Father, and gave them the prospect and the promise of another life beyond the grave.

In a few years the followers of Christ were to be found in every city of the Roman Empire. Multitudes of people had learned to love, honour, and obey the Lord Jesus Christ with a pure and passionate devotion. He took the

place among His followers which the Roman Emperor had sought as the head of the Roman system. And the Invisible Lord of the Christian community was loved and obeyed as Roman Emperor never was. The two empires went on side by side, often standing towards one another in armed neutrality, quite as often in the relation of persecutors and persecuted. Both claimed to be universal, and both claimed the whole world and all the life of man. Rome with its grand system of positive law, its grand supremacy of force, its appeal to outward order and political well-doing, was confronted with a society based on a felt relation to an unseen Master, whose laws were summed up in love to Christ and to each other for Christ's sake, whose citizenship was recognized by themselves to be in the unseen world, and whose highest aim it was to secure for themselves and for all men a share in the common brotherhood. These two societies stood together: the one having its roots, its activities, and its hopes in the visible and temporal world; the other, while laying a strong practical grasp on the duties of common life, yet pitched its motive, encouragement, and goal far beyond the present world; and the issue of the conflict was decided within a few centuries of its commencement, and Rome had to say, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean."

It may be said on behalf of science that however great may have been the majesty, power, and dominion of Rome, the object which the man of science worships is immeasurably greater and more majestic. It is freely granted that Nature is greater than the Roman Empire. We gladly acknowledge the grandeur of the conception which informs science at the present time. But our contention is that the difference between the object of worship as set forth in "Natural Religion" and the object as set forth in the Roman worship

of the state, is one of degree and of magnitude, not of kind. They are both on the same plane, both make the same affirmations and the same denials, and both ignore in the same way the deeper needs of human nature. No doubt at the present hour the noise of the conflict is great, and were we to listen to the voices of men of science as they glorify their negatives, we would be inclined to say that they have gotten the victory. But any system which ignores the spiritual and eternal, is from the nature of the case inadequate and fore-doomed to failure. In the earlier conflict with the great Roman power, the Christian faith overcame because it had regard not only to the things which are seen and temporal, but also to the things which are unseen and eternal. Nor will the present conflict have any other issue. Affirmatives are stronger than negatives, especially if they are grounded on what is rational and true in the nature of things, in the nature of man, and in the character of God.

We have seen in the former chapter that it is possible to take a hopeful view of the final outcome of the history of the world, th sin, suffering, and misery of the world notwithstanding. If there is good ground for holding that a great purpose rules the progress of things, and a great consummation lies at the end, then the past history obtains a new and loftier meaning. If there be truth in the facts on which Christianity is based, then we see that the moral heroism which has been manifested in human life has its prototype in the Divine life. God has come to meet and to help the strivings of His creatures after life and purity; has taken His own share in that striving; and has shown to man a heroism pure and great, untinged with the admixture of earthly or selfish elements.

Nor is this all. As God has come to meet and help man's

strivings after life and holiness, and to crown them with success, so He has come to meet and to crown man's strivings after truth, and to give him a right apprehension of the truth which underlies the shifting appearances of the world. The story of the religions of the world and the history of man's speculative thought assume a new significance when we look at them in the light of the new manifestation of Himself God has given us in Christ. The strivings after God, the reaching forth after Him if haply they may find Him, dark and dismal as they are in themselves, become rich in meaning when regarded in the light of the absolute and universal truth of Christianity. Both the measure of truth which the religions reached, and the failure to reach permanent truth, become full of significance. Christ is the justification of a suffering world, Christ is also the justification of the course of human thought, the answer to the questions of the intelligence, and the solution of the moral difficulties which have perplexed human hearts through all time. The numerous works on the science of religion, the gathered and classified facts regarding the religions of the world now available to the student of religion, have brought fresh light to the significance of Christianity, and the religions themselves receive fresh light from it. The numerous works which tell, from various points of view, the story of science and philosophy from the dawn of human thought onwards, have an interest for us of a surpassing kind. They tell us what human thought needs to solve its own problems, they formulate for us what answers have been found, and enable us thus to state the question and to show how every problem of life, thought, and duty receives a hopeful solution, or at least the hope of a solution, through the person, life, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We do not mean that Christianity is a revelation of science and philosophy. What we mean is this, that there is in Christianity the manifestation of a new set of facts and of a new spiritual order, which, taken in connection with the facts and order with which science and philosophy have hitherto had to deal, set them in a new light, and give them a higher significance. Each step in the actual process of human history and human thought becomes of larger importance, for they were efforts to reach the higher truth, which brings all lesser truths into harmony. When the facts of Christianity are seen in relation to the nature of man and to the purpose of the world, all the strivings of the past, both in thought and in life, receive a new meaning. The more we learn about the course of human thought, the more do we perceive that Jesus Christ has met human needs, satisfied human thought, and has given us the absolute and universal truth we need.

It is premature as yet to write a philosophy of religion, or to construct a formula sufficient to express the organic movement of religious thought in former times. The facts are not yet ascertained nor properly classified, and we must wait a while if we are not to bring our theory to the facts, and then torture the facts to make them fit the theory. To speak of an organic development of religion, to range religions in a historic line, and regard each successive religion as taking up the problem of religion at the stage to which it had been brought by former religions, is, at the least, premature. It is customary to write the history of modern philosophy in this way, and with better show of reason. For in modern philosophy we do have a succession of great names, a literature in which the influence exerted by a philosopher on his successors may be traced, and a series of attempts to state and solve the problem of

philosophy; and yet it has been found impossible to write the history of modern philosophy in such a way as to bring out an organic movement of human thought. Still less is it possible to place the religions of the world in such a position as to make it manifest that they are successive stages in the organic evolution of thought.

It can be shown, on the contrary, that the great religions of the world have each had a separate development, and more particularly that the religions of India and China had no connection with and no influence on the religions of Israel and of Greece. It is only within recent years that the Western nations have become aware of the rich stores of treasured human life and thought laid up in the literature and history of India and China. We have learnt a little of the earnestness and power which have marked the struggle of our Aryan kinsmen to attain to life and duty and truth. But there is much yet to learn not only with regard to the actual history of the Eastern peoples, but with regard also to the influence which the study of the facts may have on Western thought and life. While therefore we do not venture to pronounce an opinion on matters not yet ripe for decision, we may be permitted to say that the study of Eastern religions has opened up to us a new set of questions, and has widened our view of what is required to satisfy the intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs of man. From the study of these religions we come back with wider thoughts and larger conceptions to the study of Christianity and of Christ. We are taught to look at them with a quickened vision, and we proceed to draw forth anew the principles and truths we already know, and to place them in the new relations disclosed to us by a study of the religions of the world. We are beginning to understand that the nations, in their striving after truth and life,

had obtained some measure of success; at least they were so far successful as to make manifest that a religion which is absolute and universal must meet and satisfy every individual and social need of men. Each religion of the world is the manifestation of a human want; and the value of each religion consists in showing how far that want was supplied by the partial truth contained in it.

The study of all the religions of the world will make known to us what a religion which is to meet and satisfy the needs of men requires to be. We go to China, and we learn from China that a religion which is to satisfy the needs of man must recognise and manifest that there is a moral order in the world. It must recognise the sacredness of common life and common work, and bind men to the performance of duty in all spheres and relationships. It cannot surrender the hope of making this world a sphere wherein righteousness and truth shall dwell and reign. For in the Chinese sacred books these things stand out as ascertained truth. Their moralists insist on the golden rule as the law of life. Their system of moral truth is full and great; they have anticipated the highest ethical teachings of recent times. And in the ethical sphere, considered simply as a system of moral rules, their gain has been singularly great. Can the religion of the Christ conserve to them what they have already gained, and also give to them what they have not yet found,—an ideal which will make their moral rules full of life and vigour? "In a world which habitually and systematically divorced the human from the divine, in an age which regarded with despair all manifestations of the seen and temporal, in a community which looked upon man's chief end as a life of asceticism and contemplation, the religion of the Chinese empire struck out a path of novelty which modern life has

made a path of permanence. It pointed to the fact that there is a divine order in mean things, in little things, in prosaic things; that the drudgery of daily toil has something to do with the interests of universal government, and that, in union with these interests, the daily toil may hope for its reward. It has bequeathed to Europe the inheritance of a thought which would make Europe its perpetual debtor,—the belief that religion has a share in the establishment of human civilization, and that the goal of a perfect civilization is the formation of a Kingdom of God. China, the most seemingly irreverent of all nations, has here joined hands with Judea, that nation which of all others has been most impressed with the personality of God. Approaching the subject from different angles, and looking at the problem with a contrary bias, they have arrived in one respect at the same goal. They have reached that thought to which the continent of Asia has been otherwise a stranger, that there is a sacred element underlying all secular phenomena, that the sphere of religion embraces the things which are present as well as the things which are to come, and that the recognised thrones and dominions of the world are as much agencies of God as the unknown principalities of the heavenly places" (The Rev. George Matheson, D.D., "The Faiths of the World," pp. 106-7). While China has thus attained in large measure to moral truth within the ethical sphere, it has not found how to touch morality with emotion, "and hence," as Dr. Flint says with great eloquence and power, "notwithstanding its admirable common sense and equally admirable moral sense, China remains almost dead and immobile, with its heart and hopes buried in the past, not only not progressing, but not even dreaming of progress; a vast monument of the insufficiency of earth without heaven, of moral precepts

without spiritual faith, of man without God; an instructive and impressive warning to Europe as to what any gospel of positivism may be expected to do for her" ("Faiths of the World," p. 419). China has, however, on a large scale and throughout a long history, taught us the one lesson she has to teach, that the absolute religion must be one which recognises the sacredness of common things, and must maintain a hope for the life that now is.

This conception of religion as morality and nothing more is the ruling idea of Chinese religion. Even those forms of Chinese religion which recognise something beyond the present life and the visible world, yet conform to the main type. Buddhism, when it passed into China, modified itself and took a local colour; and the speculations of Laou-tsze, though they passed beyond the bounds which Confucius had set to human thought and speculation, were constrained to recognise and provide for the great aims of practical life and duty. "The great object of Laou-tsze seems to have been to elucidate and develop his idea of the relations between something which he calls Taou and the universe. To this Taou, Laou-tsze refers all things as the ultimate ideal unity of the universe. All things originate from Taou, and to Taou they at last return. Formless, it is the cause of form. It is an eternal road; along it all beings and all things walk; but no being made it, for it is being itself, and yet nothing. It is the path and also the path-goers, and everything and nothing, and the cause and the effect of all" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, p. 664). The system of Laou-tsze may be looked at as a reaction and protest against the narrowness of the positive conception lying at the basis of Confucianism. But the strong hand of Positivism was laid on it, and it also was bound to become self-controlling in practical life.

Practically we may regard the Chinese demand as a universal and absolute religion to amount to this, that such a religion must be a guide and stimulus to men, in order that they may live their life in hope, and do the work of their generation. It must be a religion which above all things recognises morality.

India, however, has more to teach us than China regarding the mind of man and the nature of that religion which will satisfy the whole nature of man. For the religious and literary history of India is rich in thought and full of instruction. How fascinating are the pages in which Max Müller describes for us the guesses at truth of our Aryan kinsmen; how deep are their thoughts on the nature of existence; and their meditations on the fleeting nature of earthly life are fraught with interest to all who think. The history of the growth of the system which we call Brahmanism is being slowly read, and will soon be told to us by the united labours of the distinguished scholars who have given their lives to this task. As matters stand at present, we are able dimly to see the great conception which lies at the foundation of the Brahman system. It is a moot question as yet whether the original faith of the Indo-European peoples was monotheistic or pantheistic. Principal Fairbairn, a high authority, is of opinion that "to Indo-European man, Heaven and God were one, not a thing but a person, whose *Thou* stood over against his *I*" (Fairbairn's "Studies," p. 38). Much is to be said in favour of this view, more especially when it is considered that in a later stage, during the Brahmana period, when the course of thought had become distinctly pantheistic, room was found for Pragàpati, the personal creator of the world. The type of thought of Brahmanism is pantheistic. It is a cosmogony in which the universe is considered as the

emanation of Deity. The sole self-existent spirit has produced from his substance various creatures, and placed himself in creation, to be known as the father and creator of all things. There is only one being, and all finite existence becomes evanescent and unreal. Side by side with the pantheistic speculative thought of India, which affirmed the existence of the universal spirit and the nothingness of all else, there ran the tendency to make this abstract, colourless deity assume a form which could awaken the sympathy of those who were accustomed to anthropomorphic worship. Pantheism and polytheism are not contradictory. Nay, pantheism demands polytheism as its complement and affirmation. So the abstract unity of things becomes the triple manifestation of the divine, in Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, or the processes of creation, preservation, and destruction in the universe. So also there is room in Brahmanism for the multiplication of local embodiments of the divine. And to-day, as Sir Alfred Lyall has so well shown, the process may be witnessed in India. We may see mythology in the process of growth, and Brahmanism makes room for all, without contradiction to its fundamental principle. In the life of Lord Lawrence we are told of a sect which took General Nicholson as the representative to them of the Divine, and other cults rise from day to day.

A good deal remains to be accomplished ere we can trace the development of Indian thought, or describe the various tendencies, speculative and practical, which were merged in Brahmanism. On the one hand it is plain that meditations on the nature of being, on the relation of the infinite to the finite, on the mystery of life and death, led directly on to the affirmation of the unity of Brahma, and of the impersonal nature of the one being. On the other hand, it is equally plain that the popular and practical belief of India never

rose to the height of this great abstraction, that they continued to worship local gods. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the abstract unity had to become concrete and widen itself to the recognition of popular needs, and the gods of the people found a place in the pantheistic system. It would be endless to enter into detail. Suffice it to say that the Indian mind is rooted in this fundamental thought. The Indian mind had wandered far from the strong, fresh feelings of life and hope which find expression in the Vedas. They had felt the burden of thought and the perplexity of problems which they could not solve. The mystery of suffering and retribution was heightened by the general belief in transmigration. "The accepted and general belief was that the souls of men had previously existed inside the bodies of other men, or gods, or animals, or had animated material objects; and that when they left the bodies they now inhabited they would enter upon a new life, of a like temporary nature, under one or other of these various individual forms—the particular form being determined by the goodness or evil of the acts done in the present existence. Life therefore was held to be a never-ending chain, a never-ending struggle, for however high the conditions to which any soul had attained, it was liable, by one act of wickedness, or even of carelessness, to fall again into one or other of the miserable states" (Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 17).

Without entering at further length into the intricacies of this system, we have said enough to show the demand which India makes on the universal religion. The wanderings and struggles of the Indian mind reveal to us some of the wants of human nature. An absolute religion must conserve the sovereignty, the permanence, and the unity of the one God. He must be first and last, cause, origin, and

purpose of everything that is. The God whom India seeks and must find is a God who is eternal and unchangeable. In very truth the religion of India may be regarded as the demand of the human heart and spirit for a fixed, unchanging foundation on which man may rest amid the changes of this fleeting world.

The transmigration doctrine also has its lesson. It teaches us that we must not only have a true doctrine about the one, but we must reach a truth which shall conserve the reality of the finite. This also is a human need, and the strange forms which the transmigration doctrine assumed attest the truth, that deep down in the Indian consciousness there was the conviction of the persistence of the human spirit across all changes. The transmigration could not destroy the identity of the spirit of man, nor break the link which bound it to the past and the future. The true way of meeting this want lay in the revelation of the truth of the immortality of man, and of the close connection which lies between our present and our future. What India sought for and did not find was a true doctrine of God and of man, and of the possibility of correspondence between God and man. And the history of Indian religion is a manifestation of this need, on a scale and with a subtlety never manifested before in human history.

The strange blending of pantheism with polytheism, which is characteristic of Brahmanism, led to many striking practical results. Where everything is divine, and regarded equally as the manifestation of divinity, it is obvious that the desire of change is removed. There can exist no motive to induce men to strive for the alteration and removal of existing facts. Accidental forms and unequal laws and institutions tend to perpetuate themselves, and are apt to be regarded as partaking of the sacredness of divine sanction.

We find accordingly that as Brahmanism attained to maturity, it laid a strong hand on society, elaborated its creed of caste, and bound the various classes with this inflexible chain. Conceived mainly in the interests of the class which was dominant at the time, and taking advantage of the various artificial social divisions then existent, Brahmanism perpetuated and made sacred this state of things for all the future. To all the dissatisfaction and unrest caused by the very nature of their religion and philosophy were added the misery and sorrow caused by the Brahmanical doctrine and practice of caste. To thoughtful minds the sense of misery grew intense, and there was no relief from the ever-pressing thought of the wretchedness of man. The division into classes and ranks left men without the consolation of the thought of society; for Brahmanism had become utterly anti-social.

These are among the circumstances which go to account historically for the rise of Buddhism. Other circumstances no doubt there were, but on these we do not dwell at present. No doubt also there was the great personality of the founder of Buddhism, and his gentle, sympathetic nature, which are essential factors in the rise of Buddhism. At all events, this great religious movement had its origin in the profound sense of human misery and sorrow, and it was essentially a movement for man's redemption from them. Man was in the presence of an irresistible power, whose goings he could not trace, from whose influence there was no escape. Behind or in this power was the weight of the universe, and it pressed directly against the individual. On his side, too, the individual felt that he had been in the presence of this power not only during the time of his conscious life, but during the former stages of his existence, and during the stages yet to be he will feel the

presence of this irresistible power. Conscious life had become a burden in itself, and the burden was made heavier by the meditative thought of the Hindu and by the social circumstances of the time. The power above and beyond them was impersonal; by the stress of need Gotama was driven to seek relief from the thought of human misery by making man impersonal also. It had a true thought at the root of it. Self-renunciation has a true and right ring about it, and has its real place in human life. But Buddhism carries renunciation so far as to renunciate even the self. The teaching of Buddhism circles round the thought of pain, its cause, its prevention, the way of overcoming pain. Existence is only pain or sorrow, the cause of pain and sorrow is desire; but in Nirvana pain and sorrow cease, and the way by which Nirvana is reached is by means of the laws formulated by Buddha.

On the basis of this absolute renunciation of self, which reaches even to the annihilation of self-consciousness, there is built a system of ethics, full of benevolence and self-sacrifice. Theoretically, at all events, the system of Buddhism is so. What Buddhism is practically is another question altogether. It inculcates charity, self-sacrifice, purity, justice. The passive and gentle virtues receive from Buddhism a recognition which is unique in the religions of Heathenism. The power of meekness, of benevolence, of self-sacrifice, is nobly set forth in the life of the founder of Buddhism. The way to Nirvana is by the destruction of malice, passion, and delusion. But what Nirvana itself means, whether it refers to existence after death or to a salvation from the sorrows of life here and now, is a question yet under discussion. But apart from that, it appears to be made out that in the long run it means

the absorption of the individual into the great stream of being; the loss of self-consciousness and of all that makes the individual. This much appears certain, and, indeed, forms the charm of Buddhism to certain Western thinkers at the present time.

Looking at Buddhism, we ask what is the demand it makes on the absolute and universal religion, and the answer is plain. The universal religion must recognise and proceed on the fact of human pain and sorrow. It must be prepared to have a gospel of deliverance from pain, must proclaim a way of relief, and provide consolation for those who have suffered. It must be filled with a passion for the relief of human suffering, otherwise it will not meet the needs of those who have embraced the tenets of Buddhism. It must be powerful to control the instincts of selfishness, to supply an adequate motive for self-renunciation, and a desire strong enough to expel desires which tend only to self; and, above all, it must provide a way and a hope for the race, that in the future a goal may be reached which will satisfy the human longing of Buddhism for the extinction of passion, malice, and delusion.

The religions of which we have now been speaking have no historical connection with Christianity, yet in Christianity are the answers to the deep questions they have asked. For Christianity lays as much stress on the sacredness of common life as China does, has as deep a sense of the eternity of the unchangeable God as Brahmanism has, and is as full of the spirit of meekness, of gentleness, and of helpfulness as Buddhism. While it possesses all these, it has them in harmony with other truths ignored, denied, or contradicted by each of these systems of religious thought. Jesus Christ has laid the strong hand of His purity on common life, and has lifted up the common round of duty

into the sacredness of religious life. Diligence in business is also a precept of Christianity, and is enforced by the example of the Master, who did not disdain the use of the workman's tools, nor the weariness which comes from toil. He knew from personal experience the lot of the workman. With the Chinese He also recognised the relations in which people stand to each other, and bound them to the performance of mutual duties. Benevolence in the ruling class and sincerity in the governed were added virtues brought in to sweeten the breath of society. The only relationship which approaches to the ideal in this religion of China is that of friend to friend. Here we find ourselves under the sway of an ampler motive, and on this common ground we meet the Chinese, are able to acknowledge the truth and goodness they have found, but we can lift them upwards to a higher sphere, and in the light of Christ replace these diverse distinctions by the thought of a common brotherhood. For we have got a new standard of human action, and a new example of obedience, and a new law of love in the words, "Love one another as I have loved you."

Further, the formulated need of China is met by Christ when He lays His hand on the future of the world and claims it for His own. He does not surrender the future of the world to sin, hatred, and unrighteousness. He is making this world to be a world of peace, righteousness, and holiness,—a world where the good of each finds its realization in the common good, and the good of the whole is reconciled with the highest good of each. The Chinese demand in Christ, which in another form is the demand of Mr. Spencer, is fully provided for, and is secured by the personal striving of the Christ,—a surer guarantee of progress than can be obtained by the working of a law of evolution, which works backwards as readily as forwards,

is as satisfied with degradation as with progress, with lawlessness and selfishness as with law and order.

India comes with her deep claim on the Christ, and asks satisfaction for her needs also. She has travailed greatly, has been burdened with the mystery of existence, and has sought long and eagerly for truth, light, and life. She has sought to know the mystery of the infinite and of the finite, and has been bewildered with the perplexity of change and time. She has found no resting-place. For she has not had the key to unlock the gates, and to let her enter into the great reconciliation given in the thought of Christianity. She has lost her hold both of the infinite and the finite, and to her neither the one nor the other has any abiding reality. For she has lost, if she ever had it, the distinction between the Maker of the world and the world He has made. The infinite and the finite were the same in kind. The finite is a mode of the infinite, partakes of the infinite substance, or is an emanation of the divine. All finite manifestations are only the necessary outcome of the infinite, links in the chain of mechanical causation, in which there is no room left for purpose or for freedom. The world and all that is therein are only the putting forth into visibility of the hidden potentialities of the one being. Nature and God are one, and nature is the adequate manifestation of God.

Now the truth which India seeks is one which must set forth and adequately conserve the abiding and the permanent. The desire of India must find satisfaction, and it is found in the higher manifestation of God, which is embodied in the facts of Christianity. Here thought has come to meet the highest thought of man, and facts are manifested which meet their deeper needs. The Creator is greater than the creation, and He has reserved for the fulness of the times the expression of those higher thoughts

and greater facts which could not be expressed until then. Nature is the work of God. But nature is not God, nor does nature exhaust the power, wisdom, and energy of the Divine. To the thought of India, which ever has sought for the permanent and universal, Christianity comes with the manifestation of the one God, eternal and unchangeable, who has made the world and all that is in it, and who comes to speak to His creatures words which they can understand. The infinite is real, for God is one.

But the finite is also real, and is not illusion, nor the merely passing flow of transient appearances. Man is real also, and the mystery of identity across the waves of change—which lies at the basis of the transmigration theory—receives its explanation when we recognise the existence and reality of finite spirits. We can only satisfy the need of personal, finite spirits when we hold fast to the truth that a personal infinite spirit lies at the basis of things, makes them, upholds them, and assigns to all of them the mode and measure of their working and the sphere of their energy. When we say that the living God is the maker, upholder, and ruler of the world, we provide for the abiding and permanent; when we say in Him we live and move and have our being, we recognise the dependence of created life on the Creator; and when we say that we can have fellowship with Him as persons with a person, we provide for the relative independence of finite spirits, and their reality, which the thought of India also demands. For Nirvana is only a makeshift, and the desire for non-existence is to be looked at as the outcome of despair. For where there was no personal life at the basis of things, and no self-consciousness in the Maker of the universe, India could find no place or ground for the permanence of self-consciousness in finite persons. Nirvana

was welcomed as a relief. But where God is believed to be a person, the belief in immortality becomes rational and desirable.

A transformed condition of this problem we shall look at in connection with the religious thought of Greece. Meanwhile we proceed to say that Buddhism has expressed as deep a need of human nature as any which has yet been formulated among natural religions. It passes away from the ground of nature to human nature. While keeping a firm hold on the fundamental thought of India, it looks at that thought in the light cast on it by misery, sorrow, and wretchedness. Buddhism is the human demand for a saviour, and in lieu of a saviour it found relief in deeds of mercy and of love, and sought to bind men together in the bonds of mutual helpfulness. By the way of self-renunciation it sought to reach the oblivion of self and of all the illusions which compassed men about on every side. It culminated in negation, and it could do nothing else, for it had a negation as its starting-point. Its god was negative, and therefore existence was vain, and eternal nothingness was its highest good. But all these negatives are only the expression of a want which Buddhism could feel, but could not answer. Let us seek to look at these negatives in the light of the affirmations of the Christ.

Instead of the blank negation which takes in Buddhism the place of the Divine, we have through the Christ the conception of the Living God, the Maker of the world, who stands to finite spirits in a relation which is best described as that of Fatherhood. A living personal intelligence abides as the centre, source, and cause of the universe. Worlds are to Him what words are to men, and they are but the vesture of His thought, the expression of His ways of thinking and modes of action. His care over His

creatures is so great that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without Him; and His ceaseless energy sustains in being everything that is. If we can verify such a thought and find this conception true, then everything becomes full of hope, and goodness may be the goal of things. It is strange to find the opposite view to this, the essential view of Buddhism, finding expression from the lips of Dr. Land. But yet it is not surprising when we find that the main conception of Buddhism is also the view which commends itself to him. "A little inquiry would show that even Materialism, Pantheism, Atheism, and other such ways of thinking, in which the majority can see nothing but backsliding and perversity, have mostly an ethical impulse, and draw strength from the fact that a man will accept from an impersonal nature-power what cannot content him if coming from the hands of a personal being, of infinite wisdom and love" (Spinoza, *Essays*, p. 72). The kind of acceptance which a man gives to the working of an impersonal nature-power is simply a submission, sullen or resigned, to the inevitable. Buddhism, without much choice, found itself in the presence of the nature-power, and sought by its creed to get rid of the consciousness altogether. It is rational to expect that the highest outcome of things shall somehow be preserved, and we have a rational expectation when we place ourselves in the hands of a personal being of infinite wisdom and love.

We find, further, that suffering and pain gain a new meaning. For in the light of the life of the Christ we see how it is possible for a man to become perfect through suffering. And self-realisation, not self-renunciation, becomes the highest end of life. Renunciation is but the means to an end, and the end is fulness of life. It is not necessary to carry it so far as to destroy the possibility of its exercise,

and it is only in certain ways and in certain relations that renunciation is a duty. For in Christ we have gained a new conception of renunciation, and have found through Him that desire is good and great and eternal. Through Him we have received an object which is fitted to call forth the energies of our being into the profoundest activity, which also will enable us to realise in our life what unpassioned goodness is. To the nerveless, emotionless, unimpassioned conception of the Hindu Buddhist, Christ opposes His own ideal of human life, as a life full of energy, and full of desire, passion, power, rich in imagination, great in thought, ardent in the pursuit of truth, and full of love to others,—a love so great that all thought of self is lost sight of and swallowed up in it.

Still further we have the reality of what Buddhism sought for and needed,—the fact of a Saviour, who has come to the help of man, an incarnation of the Divine, but an incarnation which has not permitted itself to be sinful or impure. The Incarnate One can bear the burdens of sin and yet remain sinless, can save others and lose Himself, and in order to help men, He became man, but kept one human life pure from the touch of sin, made one human life to be pure, holy, and sinless, and so found a place into which all sinful, unholy, weak, suffering, and miserable people might enter and find peace, purity, and rest.

VII.

THE HEBREW SOLUTION.

IN order further to elucidate the sure knowledge of God which we have obtained through the Christ, we shall proceed to speak shortly of the two religions with which Christianity stands in direct historical relation, viz., the religion of Israel and the religion of Greece. Christianity is related to the religion of Israel as fulfilment to promise. There is no other instance of this kind among the religions of the world. The only approach to it is in the relation of Buddhism to Brahmanism. But the connection between these is that of reaction and opposition, not that of development and fulfilment. While Mohammedanism may be left out of account, inasmuch as it has contributed no new element to the religions of the world. Of the Hebrew race it may be said with truth that their religion is unique. They alone retain a sure hold on the living God. And for them God's existence was the one thing of which they were sure. As a consequence of this settled conviction and habit of mind, human life and human duty assumes a greater, higher significance than elsewhere. Evil assumes a darker form, and becomes sin. It is no longer the result of conflict, nor a stage in a further progress; it is a traversing of life's aim, a blameworthy act, or a degradation for which man is responsible. Good also has won a higher form than

elsewhere. Here for the first time we find that good means blessedness, not mere happiness, and not prosperity, but holiness.

With clear open-eyed vision the Hebrew walked onwards with a definite aim in life, and a definite hope before him. For the best and bravest of their race, life and life's work meant to walk with God and to abide with Him. Moral problems and moral difficulties pressed on them as on the nations around, and pressed all the harder because of their faith in God. There is no such statement of moral perplexity and doubt in any literature as we find in the Book of Job; nor any provisional answer which has so much of truth in it. They laid a firm hold on the facts of this world's life, looked at the facts of life without shrinking, and everywhere they see God, trace His steps, and live under the consciousness of His presence.

The features common to Christianity and Judaism, and which separate them from all other systems, consist in this, that the object of worship and of thought is a person. They are not separated merely by the truths they teach, for, as we have seen, the religions of the world and the thought of the world are full of truth; undoubted and unquestioned truth. If ethical and moral truth were all that man needs, then enough of that kind of truth is to be found in the ethical systems of the world. It is from another reason that the religion of the Old Testament has maintained its perennial power. It is because over against us in the pages of the Old Testament stands the living God who can say, "I am!" who manifests Himself unto man, and can command, exhort, and draw people unto Himself. He is not only a "stream of tendency," a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, but He is the person who makes the righteousness, and makes it possible for man. In the

Hebrew Scriptures we find a God with whom we can enter into personal relations, and therefore duty becomes rational, and the performance of it a reasonable service For duty is the expression of a relation between persons; a duty to God becomes irrational and impossible were we driven to accept the theory of an unknowable God. But in the Hebrew Scriptures the two correlatives to duty are presented in the loftiest fashion, and all the Old Testament views of life and work are based on these correlatives, which are the personality of God and the personality of man.

Theories and speculations are not abundant in the Old Testament. But there are facts without number, and there is a consistent and hopeful progress from beginning to end. When we look at the facts recorded in it, we find ourselves in a region of more consistent thought than we find elsewhere. Here the dark nature ground passes out of view, and we have no pantheistic confusion between good and evil, between God and the world. Moral distinctions stand out with startling clearness. The freedom of God, His holiness, His wisdom, and love are consistently conserved. Nor is matter, nor force, looked at as datum objective to God. Underlying the Hebrew facts there is a theory of creation greater and more consistent than the most recent theories on the question.

Creation has it origin in the free act of the Creator. By this conception mechanical causation is transformed and becomes the causation of purpose, which is the action of intelligence and freedom working for an end by the use of adequate means. Nature finds its first beginnings in freedom, which makes it intelligible that freedom should be its final outcome. Mechanical causation is what it is because the nature and relations, the being and becoming, the action and interaction of particular things, are deter-

mined for them by the action of the Creator, who out of an indefinite number of possible worlds chose to make the particular world we know, and made it for a certain purpose. This is the only view which can consistently recognise and without intellectual confusion realise in thought the undeniable fact that the qualities of things seem to be arbitrary, and not determined by any inherent necessity of nature, or, as Sir John Herschel and Clerk Maxwell have put it, the ultimate atoms of matter bear the stamp of manufactured articles. Their nature, the mode and the measure of their working, are determined for them, and bear evidence that they are the result of freedom and intelligence working to definite end.

The mind and heart of the Hebrews rested in this thought. Things and their qualities and inter-relations were what they were because of God's appointment. The day and the night were to them forms of the covenant which God made with the creation. And the uniformities of the world were such in virtue of the Divine action and appointment. Thus the relation of God to the world with the Hebrews assumed also a unique form. They escaped the difficulty and danger which arise when we conceive the world to be an effect of which God is the cause. For when we think of relation through cause and effect, we regard cause and effect as on the same plane of being. Nothing is in the effect which was not in the cause, and the cause passes over into the effect. To speak of God simply as the cause of the world is to make the world equal to God, and to make it the adequate measure of the Divine. By the strength of their concrete thinking, and by their firm grasp on revealed facts, and by the power of their fundamental principle, the Hebrews escaped this danger. They did conceive a relation of God to the world, but not the simple

relation of cause and effect. It was something far more vital and far more complete, and far more difficult to express in adequate terms. It was not the relation of a thinker to his thought, nor of a workman to his work, nor of an agent to his act, though each of these analogies has a part in the preformed conception of the relation of God to the world which underlies the Hebrew Scriptures. Creation is the work of God, yet not all His work. It is formed and fashioned by His thought, yet He has more thought than He has embodied in the world. It manifests His wisdom, goodness, and power, and yet He is greater than the world. And the world does not express the fulness of God.

It has indeed been often said that the thought of God in the Hebrew mind is so great and so vividly felt that the world became to them unreal and unsubstantial. God was so real to them that all else became as the shadows of a dream. No doubt there are expressions in the Hebrew scriptures which, taken by themselves, can bear this meaning; but a deeper consideration of them, and a thorough study of the Hebrew Scriptures, make it manifest that the Hebrew never lost hold of the reality of the world, nor regarded it as the fleeting manifestation of something lying beyond. He never lost the persuasion of his own reality nor lost consciousness of his own personality as one to whom God could speak and who could speak to God. The visible world was very real, and the kingdom of God in the world was an abiding fact. Both the world and himself were real simply because they were both the creation of God; and He who was from everlasting to everlasting brought them forth, gave them their being, and sustained them in being.

Here then we come again to a radical divergence of

thought. According as we take one or other view, so our whole thinking and speculation will be determined. To the Hebrew, all is finite except God. He alone is infinite and eternal; and the universe is made by Him. All things are created by Him. In trying to express Hebrew thought, theology has borrowed the language of science, and has said all things are made out of nothing, in a certain way and in a certain time. The Hebrews themselves have not tried to express their fundamental thought in that way. What they have said is that creation means the bringing into existence of something which before was not, and that the creation was brought into existence in such a way that the Creator is no less after the act than He was before. The universe is finite, created, made, and created by God. It is possible for thought to rest in this conception, if we have any true knowledge of God. This is one view; and there is only another view possible, though it has many forms. All these other forms proceed on the assumption of the unity of God and the world. In this relation there is really no difference between the view which regards the world as the outcome, result, and manifestation of the force which is one and unchangeable in nature and quantity; or the view, which regards the universe as a system of signs, an embodied divine language; or the view which regards the universe as a system of thought-relations which exist only for thought. For all these views agree in this, that they assume both sides of the equation to be equal. The sum of the manifestations makes up the force; or the contents of the notion of mind are equal to the contents of the notion of the world; in other words, whether the system we advocate be materialistic or idealistic, whether matter determines mind, or mind determines matter, is really nothing to the purpose.

For in the one case matter is held to contain in itself all the outcome of the universe. It has the promise and the potency of all forms of life. In the other case, mind is held to be first, and to have moulded matter for the manifestation of itself. But in the long run both elements formally coalesce, are mutually expressive of each other. Each is the other in the end. Our systems of philosophy, when followed to their logical result, lead by necessity of thought to the identification of God and the world; and it is scarcely possible, if we yield to them, to save our deepest convictions from the ruin wrought by that entanglement.

It is difficult, owing to our Western habits of thought, to obtain a clear view of what the Hebrew Scriptures really mean. We bring to them many pre-suppositions derived from other sources altogether. And even theologians often insist on bringing the categories of philosophy to the bolder, wider, grander thought which underlies the Hebrew Scriptures. They will insist on assuming that the "principles of cosmical multiplicity must be in God;" which in a sense may be true,—in the sense, to wit, that all the variety and beauty and glory of the world must have had their source and origin in God. They took form and being by His appointment: He commanded and it was done. Yet it by no means follows that all the principles of Divine life and action are in the world, or that the distinctions which are in the world represent distinctions in Him. For this would lead us again in another form of the emanation theory,—the theory which looks on the universe as a necessary evolution and manifestation of the Divine. The Hebrew view is different. It is that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the world manifests His wisdom, glory, and power.

In this relation let us listen for a moment to the judicious Hooker:—"Moses, in describing the work of creation, attributeth speech unto God: God said, Let there be light; Let there be a firmament; Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place; Let the earth bring forth; Let there be light in the firmament of heaven. Was this only the intent of Moses to signify the infinite greatness of God's power by the easiness of his accomplishing such effects, without travail, pain, or labour? Surely it seemeth that Moses had here besides this a further purpose, namely, first to teach that God did not work as a necessary but a voluntary agent, intending beforehand, and decreeing with Himself that which did outwardly proceed from Him: secondly, to show that God did there institute a law naturally to be observed by creatures; and therefore, according to the manner of laws, the institution thereof is described as being established by solemn injunction. His commanding those things to be which are, and to be in such sort as they are, to keep that tenure and course which they do, importeth the establishment of nature's law. This world's first creation, and the preservation since of things created, what is it but only so far forth a manifestation by execution what the eternal law of God is concerning things natural. And as it cometh to pass in a kingdom rightly ordered, that after a law is once published, it presently taketh effect far and wide, all states framing themselves thereunto; even so let us think it fareth in the natural course of the world: since the time that God did first proclaim the edicts of His law upon it, heaven and earth have hearkened unto His voice, and their labour hath been to do His will: He made a law for the rain; He gave His decree unto the sea, that the waters should not pass His commandment" (Hooker,

"Ecclesiastical Polity," Dean Church's Edition, pp. 12, 13).

"God did not work as a necessary but as a voluntary agent." Here is the distinctive note of Hebrew thinking, in which it stands apart from all other thought known amongst men. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Creation was a free act on the part of the Creator. The being, nature, and mode of working of finite things were freely ordered and determined by Him. But the Hebrew thought goes further, and reverently regards the Creator as binding Himself to proceed in His creative work in a certain line, and for the manifestation of a certain purpose. A divine thought is in creation which can attain to complete expression only in a gradual manner. A divine order and progress are in the world, and will attain completeness when the Divine purpose is accomplished. Thus the Hebrew conceived the world to have an absolute beginning in the free act of God; but when the creation began to be, the first step had a determining influence on all that followed; not a determining influence in the way of absolute external necessity binding on God, but an influence of a binding kind, because the first outline of creation must be consistent with its final outcome. It takes to the Hebrew mind the form of a binding covenant between the Creator and His creation. In fulfilment of this purpose we find in the Book of Genesis the conception of a progressive creation; the origin and working of a definite plan of organization and of life. Creative energy appears at successive epochs, when a fulness of time was come, and passes into the sustaining activity of God. The forms of life passed from a less perfect to a more perfect form, from one stage to another of the manifestation of the Divine thought, until man came, who sums up in himself the whole creation.

To use the words of Robert Browning, a thinker and a poet, who has thought more deeply, and has entered with broader sympathy into the grand old Hebrew way of viewing man and the world than any other poet or thinker,—Browning, who is to us the greatest Christian poet of our time—

> "Thus God dwells in all,
> From life's minute beginnings up at last
> To Man—the consummation of this scheme
> Of being, the completion of this sphere
> Of life; whose attributes had here and there
> Been scattered o'er the visible world before,
> Asking to be combined, dim fragments meant
> To be united in some wondrous whole;
> Imperfect qualities throughout creation
> Suggesting some one creature yet to make,
> Some point where all those scattered rays should meet
> Convergent in the faculties of man:
> Power—neither put forth blindly, nor controlled
> Calmly by perfect knowledge, to be used
> At risk, inspired or checked by hope and fear;
> Knowledge—not instruction, but the slow,
> Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil
> Strengthened by love; Love—not serenely pure,
> But strong from weakness, like a chance-sown plant
> Which, cast on stubborn soil, puts forth changed buds
> And softer stains, unknown in happier climes;
> Love which endures and doubts, and is oppressed
> And cherished, suffering much and much sustained,
> And blind, oft-failing, yet believing love,
> A half-enlightened, often chequered trust:—
> Hints and previsions of which faculties
> Are strewn confusedly everywhere about
> The inferior natures, and all lead up higher,
> All shape out dimly the superior race,
> The heir of hopes too fair to turn out false,
> And man appears at last. So far the seal
> Is put on life—one stage of being complete,
> One scheme wound up; and from the grand result

A supplementary reflux of light
Illustrates all the inferior grades, explains
Each back step in the circle." *

By one supreme effort the Hebrews succeeded in separating the spiritual from the material, the Creator from the creature. They had the conception of one living and true God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and because its Maker, distinct from it. From the first the grand central truth of the unity of God stands out in absolute distinctness, There is no hesitating search after God, no progress in the discovery of truth. The Old Testament no doubt does contain the view of a progress in the knowledge of God, and His character is unfolded with increasing clearness as the years pass on; but in regard to the doctrine of the unity of God, His distinctness from nature and His personality, the earlier records of the Hebrew people are clear and emphatic, as clear and emphatic as anything contained in the later Scriptures.

It would lead us too far afield to inquire into the cause of this singular achievement on the part of the Hebrew people. Of the truth of it no one can doubt. We are concerned at present with the truth, and not with the way by which it was reached by the Hebrew people, who were the witnesses to the world of the unity of God. Leaving this inquiry as unnecessary for our purpose, we ask at present whether this conception of the divine unity and of the distinction of God from nature can leave room for the investigations of science, and for the prevalence of method, law, and order in nature? Is it consistent with evolution, for example? and consistent with the movement of relative independence we find in nature?

* *Robert Browning's Poetical Works, Vol. I.*, "*Paracelcus*," *pp.* 188-9.

The doctrine of creation, as we find it in the Hebrew Scriptures, leaves room for every legitimate inquiry of science, and for every investigation of philosophy. Stuart Mill once remarked, "The laws of nature cannot account for their own origin;" and the doctrine of creation, when we have got it, does not of itself tell us what particular kind of world it is which God created. It simply tells us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But what the material, forces, laws, and modes of working of the world are, we must discover for ourselves as best we can. Here we are left uncontrolled, and free to ascertain all that can be found out regarding the particular system of things in which we find ourselves. It makes no difference in this inquiry whether we regard the world as self-caused, self-regulated, and self-preserved, or as ordained by God. In either case the laws remain the same, and may be investigated, ascertained, and classified. The law of gravitation is equally true whether it be so by God's appointment or by blind necessity. In like manner all that belongs to second causes are what they are, apart from any theory of how they came to be.

The doctrine of creation, then, leaves room for science and its investigations into the nature of things and the laws of their working. It seeks only to account for the origin and cause of them. And yet the doctrine of creation must not be limited to the calling into existence of the first rude beginnings of the world. The view of the Scriptures is this, that creation was not confined to one act, but, on the contrary, consisted of repeated and successive acts of the Divine will. We find that modern thought is not at all disinclined to accept the idea of a single originative creative act, which called matter and its forces into existence. It gives them a beginning, and allows them to go on from that

starting-point. They will permit the supernatural to act in the remote past, and under other conditions, if they can get rid of the thought of what is above nature here and now. No difficulty is found in the supposition that non-living matter attained to life in some mysterious fashion in the far-off past, though they recognise that now life only comes from life. But the Hebrew conception was greater and more consistent. There was a series of progressive creative acts, each of which proceeded on all that went before, and prepared the way for all that was to follow. Creation went on according to order, method, and law. These, however, were not in the created things themselves, but in the plan and purpose of the Creator. Each step in advance is creative; but as each creative act is done, it takes its place among the forces and laws which make up nature.

The thought of the Hebrews has other grander and more far-reaching issues than even those already indicated. They seem to have anticipated the remark of Hume that "the world is a singular effect." For God could make a living world and people it with creatures which have life and movement and growth, have a certain power of self-development, which can live their own life, and yet never lose their dependence on their Creator. In this relation the Hebrew conception far transcends the thought of Greece, from which we have received the tradition which regards the relation of God to the world in the light of the analogy between a workman and his work. The technic conception falls short, in every way, of the greatness of the Old Testament idea of the relation of God to the world. The order of the world is grounded by them in the will of God, and the advent of successive orders of beings on the earth finds a rational explanation in the creative agency of the Living God, which is conditioned in turn by the preceding

creative acts already ordered, and sustained by the Divine activity in the natural order of things as soon as they are created.

It thus appears that when we trace out the hints of the Old Testament Scripture, and discover their underlying thought, we find a view of the world, its origin and its laws, which is consistent in itself, and consistent with all the legitimate claims of science. When we add to this the conception of God as the sustainer and preserver of everything that is, we get a worthy thought of the being and preserving of the world. The physical universe is every moment, in all its events and processes, dependent on God. This does not deny, it rather affirms, the reality of the world and the efficiency of second causes. It does not reduce the processes of the world to a mere seeming, or make them illusory, as is done in all pantheistic schemes of thought. They are real processes, and natural causes are true causes. But these causes have being and efficiency because they are interpenetrated and made effective by the fiat of the Living God.

God is regarded as the founder and conductor of the world's processes, and therefore this working of His is in time. So far as He has put Himself into the world, and embodied His will and thought in finite things, God may be said to live a life and to do a work in time. He abides in the world, and the temporal activity of the world is His activity. But His abiding in the world is, on the Scriptural view, with the purpose of making the world a fit and adequate place for His tabernacle. Finite creation could not receive God, but in the long process of the Divine working may be made fit for the dwelling-place of the Most High. There is more of the Divine in the organic world than in the inorganic world, and more in the intelligent

world than in the merely organic, and more in the spiritual world than in the merely intelligent; and each higher nature more fully receives and manifests the Divine.

Here then we begin to lay hold of the order and progress which give form and shape to the growth of the Hebrew Scriptures. How shall creation become the adequate expression of the Divine thought and the fit dwelling-place of the Divine presence?—this is the ultimate question in the Hebrew mind. It no doubt assumed many forms as the years passed on. But underlying all particular questions is the one fundamental thought that somehow man could come to union and fellowship with God. This is the more wonderful when we have regard to the amazing loftiness of the conception of the power, holiness, and righteousness of God which filled the Hebrew mind. How great and sublime these thoughts of the majesty of God were, is known to every reader of the Psalms and Prophets; and yet they regarded this God as a God whom they could know, love, and serve. In one aspect of the Scriptures, the doctrine of God seems to be developed in such a way as to remove Him farther and farther from the world and from man. In times of formalism, when life and faith were cold and without power, this conception dominated every other, until Scholastic Judaism would not write the ineffable Name and would not speak nor think of God save in words of a negative kind. Alongside, however, of the growth of their knowledge of the majesty and greatness of God and their consequent increase of reverence and awe of Him, there was the growth of friendship and love, which drew them ever nearer to Him, and led them to speak of Him and to Him in the language of passionate personal appropriation. There is something singularly striking in this strange union of the deepest awe and reverence with the most

direct personal love and friendship. The greater their conception of God became, the more passionate grew their longing to find in Him their refuge and their strength.

Many questions remained unanswered, many problems could not yet obtain a direct solution, more specially the problem of the moral government of the world laid its heavy burden on the Hebrew mind. But in the midst of these unanswered questions and unsolved problems, they held fast to their fundamental principle, nor ever lost the hope that there would be a justification of the ways of God to man. The hope of this was grounded in the doctrine that man was made in the image of God, and because man was made in the image of God, the hope of redemption could never be lost. To them came also a more definite hope as the time passed on and the distinctive features of the religion of Israel came into view. Modern criticism has not in any measure or degree touched the great outstanding feature of the religion of the Hebrews. The Messianic hope and expectation remain, and with them remain the particular form which the desire for fellowship with God assumed. In the future and in connection with the Messiah, God would indeed dwell with man, and righteousness would reign on the earth.

In connection with this expectation of the coming of the Messiah we find the richest development of Hebrew thought and the widest outlook on man and on the world. Their doctrine of creation must also be looked at in this light. For the Messianic hope has helped to give firmness and strength to the reality of the world and to the validity of second causes, as these were held by the writers of Scripture. Apart from this hope, it would almost appear as if, sometimes, the Hebrew mind lost hold of the reality of things, and the phenomena of the world became, at such

times, simply the manifestation of the mind, the presence, and the power of God. The Messianic hope laid hold on the mind of Israel, and caused all the lines of Israel's thinking to become fruitful. The movement and life in creation become a movement full of hope, for it is movement towards a goal. The successive acts of creative might, and the product of these acts, assume a larger meaning. Without the Messianic hope, Israel would have still given to men the great thought of creation. They would have surpassed the human mind in the conception of the omnipresence of God and the extent of His kingdom which ruleth over all. To them we would have owed that thought that He who is from everlasting to everlasting is also the dwelling-place of His people in all generations. But in the light of the Messianic hope, the world attains to a vaster meaning and obtains a real existence. Closely connected with the Messianic hope is the doctrine of Wisdom, and the doctrine of Wisdom is one way of setting forth the relation of the world to God. In another view the doctrine of Wisdom sets forth the order of the world, and its onward progress towards a goal. Wisdom was with God when "He prepared the heavens, when He set a compass upon the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment (Prov. viii. 27-29). Wisdom had thus a share and part in the laying of the foundations and in the building up of the framework of the world. But wisdom was also in the working out of the course of the world, and has its part—the supreme controlling part—in the moral progress of men. Moral order, stable government, and onward progress were possible, because wisdom abode in the world and in the lives of

men. "By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes reign and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (Prov. viii. 15, 16). The settled order of the world is possible, because Wisdom is present to lead in the ways of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.

The Hebrew mind was thus enabled to obtain a firmer hold of the Divine quality in creation, and to find a basis for the reality of the world and of the world's history. For by this means they were able to see that the movement of the world was part of the Divine activity. The Divine presence was in the world. There was for a time a tendency in Hebrew thought in the direction of making the Divine in the world and in history to be the full and adequate measure of the Divine working, and the complete manifestation of the Divine presence. "The idea," says Dr. Davidson in the article "Job," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "of what God was in Himself was in complete harmony with His manifestation of Himself in providence, in the events of human life, and the history of men and nations. The philosophy of the wise did not go behind the origin of sin, or refer it to the freedom of man; but sin existing, and God being in immediate personal contact with the world, every event was a direct expression of His moral will and energy: calamity fell on wickedness, and success attended right-doing. The view of the moral harmony between the nature of God and the events of providence in the fortunes of men and nations is the view of the Hebrew wisdom in its oldest form" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xiii., p. 699 *a*).

While this is undoubtedly true of the Hebrew wisdom in the aspect of it to which Dr. Davidson more immediately refers, there is another aspect of it which has more immediate reference to the sustaining activity of God in creation.

It is true that every event of providence was the expression of the moral will and energy of God; but the Hebrew wisdom, even in its earlier form, had some insight into a deeper relation between God and the world than has found expression in the Book of Job. Shall we venture to express it in this way?—Wisdom represents to the Hebrew mind that Divine activity, that energy of Himself which God has put into the world. It represents the immanence of God in the world. The wisdom which was with God when the foundations of the world were laid continued to be in the world, was, in short, the abiding principle of order in the physical, the organic, and the moral world. But the recognition of wisdom as the immanent form of divine energy which gave to the world its order and progress, tended to raise the other questions discussed in the Book of Job and in many of the Psalms. The tendency to make the sustaining activity of God and His ways in providence to be the only and the adequate manifestation of God, led to grave confusion of thought. It was impossible on this view to vindicate the ways of God. And therefore the Hebrews moved on to the thought that the world was yet incomplete, and the Divine purpose was not yet realised. In this way the thought of God in the Hebrew mind was rescued from this entanglement. The Hebrew doctrine of Wisdom was grasped by the Messianic hope, and lifted up into a larger sphere. Creation was as yet unfinished, and so it could not be the full expression of the Divine purpose. Still Divine activity was in the world; the moral action of God was in immediate contact with the events of human history; and the hand of God was on the helm to guide events to their purposed and destined end. The Hebrews learned to wait in hope for the coming events which should reveal God, and justify His ways to man and to the world.

The Divine thought would come to fruition, and Divine Wisdom, embodied in the order and life of the world, was the forerunner of the Word which would become incarnate,—the Word which had created, did preserve, and would redeem the world.

The Messianic hope of the Hebrews had indeed other forms,—forms which arose out of and were determined by the peculiar events of their own history. Though coloured by the peculiar history of Israel, the Messianic hope had a significance wider and more universal than at first sight appears. They expected a prophet to reveal God, and to make known His will to man; a priest to make intercession and atonement for the sins of the people; a king to rule and defend them, to subdue enemies, to win and keep the loyalty and love of His own people. These were some of the forms taken by the hope of Israel, but these hopes varied from age to age, according to the need of the time and the kind of help they most required at any particular era. In one shape or other it coloured all the life and determined the thinking of the people. A larger discussion of this topic is quite unnecessary, we only allude to it here, as without it there can be no true conception of the indebtedness of mankind to the Hebrews, nor any true measure of the Hebrew solution of the problem of man's knowledge of God.

It is true, indeed, that the Hebrew people were little addicted to metaphysical speculation, and did not think out the problem of an essential relation of God to the world. They held fast by certain fundamental assumptions, but did not follow these out into detail. God is, to them, exalted high above man and nature, yet man is created in the image of God, and the personality of God and of man is fundamental and always acknowledged. The relation

between God and man is ethical, and is placed on a religious basis. It assumed the form of a Divine condescension. God in His condescending grace communicates Himself to man, and writes a new law on the hearts of His people. Jehovah is by no means regarded as far off from the world, nor regarded as uncommunicative; He, on the contrary, is nigh unto the world, filling it with His omnipresence. He revealed Himself to the patriarchs in a manifold manner, and in a special way to His covenant people, as their Lawgiver, Judge, Avenger, who inspired prophets, rulers, and artists, and by many appearances and signs made Himself known unto men. The Hebrew religion, in opposition to the whole heathen world, upheld and maintained the truth of the holy personality of God, and testified continuously to the fact that God was pure and highly exalted above nature and the whole world.

On the other hand, however, there are indications not a few in the Scriptures of the Old Testament of an intense desire on the part of Israel to find a closer bond of union between the Divine and human. Taking up the scattered hints and tracing out their meaning, we find a number of passages which throw light on the relation of God to the world as it was conceived by the Hebrews. There is first the idea of the Maleach Jehovah, the mediator between God and the patriarchs; between God and the theocratic people. Here is shadowed forth the idea of one who is at once in the world as a part and helper of the world's process, and also one in fellowship with God. The Maleach Jehovah has not merely a theocratic function to fulfil; in some of the Psalms a cosmical significance is attributed to Him. In this respect the idea of the "Angel of Jehovah" gave definiteness to the conception of God's relation to the world.

Again light is cast on the Hebrew conception by the doctrine of the Divine Word. Without entering on the subsequent development of Jewish speculation we may say here that the Word of God took to itself an objective shape and form. It was a *Word* which could be sent, a Word which could undertake a work of creation, of government, of preservation, and of redemption.

We have already spoken of the doctrine of Divine Wisdom; and these three forms may suffice to indicate how the Hebrew mind sought to conceive the relation of the world to God. No doubt with regard to this aspect of the question of the knowledge of God, the Hebrew thought never arrived at a clear expression. But then the hints and outlines of the subsequent development of Christian thought are to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, and there is nothing in them contradictory of or opposed to the Christian conception which looks on the creation as finding its completeness and perfection in Christ Jesus our Lord. There is an inward movement in the world; a spiritual and divine power is immanent in creation: there is the possibility of union darkly and vaguely foreshadowed in the Old Testament, which finds its full realization in the New.

Let us here sum up what we have found to be the main contributions of the Hebrews to the solution of the problem of our knowledge of God. We have found that the Hebrews are alone in holding clearly and firmly a lofty conception of the spirituality, oneness, and holiness of the living God. They are alone also in holding a doctrine of creation, which makes creation to be an ordered world, with a definite beginning, progress, and end. With their defined doctrine of creation and providence, they alone were able to hold firm and fast the abiding reality of moral distinctions, and the consequent final victory of good over evil. They

believed in God, they knew Him, and therefore they held fast to the hope of the future. They were able to look forward to the consummation of the world plan and the realization of the Divine purpose. The basis of this hope lay in the fact that they had not sought after God, but God had sought after them. The Hebrew knew and was persuaded that by searching he could not find out God; that he could not unaided stand in the presence of the inaccessible Light. At the same time he knew that God could reveal Himself unto man. He could know the God who had called Abraham his friend. So the Hebrew Scriptures have this additional peculiarity; they are professedly the record of God's seeking after man.

As a consequence of this fundamental fact, let us note another thing; let us note the fearless confidence with which, in the Hebrew Scriptures, God commits Himself to man. He is not afraid of being misunderstood. He condescends to use human language to express thoughts which human language can hardly compass. He adapts the revelation of Himself to the moral and spiritual state of the people to whom He speaks. Nay, He will speak of Himself, and will allow His people to speak and think of Him as if He were a tribal God. The record of His revelation He has also permitted to remain in such a state as to bear traces of all the successive stages through which He led Israel from the first beginnings of their knowledge of Him until they rose to the height of that great conception of the height, majesty, purity, and love of God which stand forth in unequalled grandeur in the closing pages of Old Testament revelation.

In the Hebrew Scriptures we find that God has not shrunk from committing the revelation of Himself to the imperfect ways of human speech and human thinking, nor has He refused to use these imperfect ways in order to

communicate such knowledge of Himself as the people of the time were able to grasp; and yet all such imperfect ways of communicating the knowledge of the one Living God are so used that the earlier stages do not fall out of harmony with the later, and the developed revelation of God and the fuller knowledge of a riper time are entirely consistent with the first beginnings of the knowledge of God given unto man.

At the same time it falls to be said, that on all sides and in all relations the Hebrew solution was incomplete. It was preparatory, full of promise; yet within the bounds of the Old Testament it was only promise. Everywhere there are questions asked, and answers could not yet be given. They knew that God is one, that He is the living God, and the God of the living. They knew Him as a God of redemption, who came into closest relations with His people. They knew that He was merciful and gracious, long-suffering and slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth. They knew that sin would be overcome, and righteousness and peace would somehow come to reign on the earth. But the way and manner lay hidden in the distant future, and they waited patiently for the disclosure of further truth and doing of Divine deeds, which would yet more clearly manifest the character of God and His great purpose in creation, providence, and redemption.

But the greatest gain of Hebrew thought and life lies in the distinction consistently maintained between God and the world. Here the gain is absolute. For the possibility of progress in theology and of any sure knowledge of God depends on this distinction,—a distinction which all the lines of modern speculation tend to obliterate. If, however, we are to hold fast to the conception of a personal God, if there be a Divine self-consciousness, then the Divine thought

has other contents in addition to the thought He has put into His creation. God and the world cannot therefore be held to be two sides of an equation, nor can the contents of the one be equal to the contents of the other. The Hebrew conception of creation as a voluntary act of the living God for ever sets that idea aside as untenable. On the other hand, however, the Hebrew conception of creation provides for the thought of a real world, and for a progress which ends, where human speculation usually begins, in the union of the Creator with His creation. Hebrew thought does not start from the datum of a mixed mass of mind and matter, or a confused existence of subject and object, out of which order, method, and intelligence slowly evolve themselves in fixed and necessary succession. It starts with the datum of the living God, who created all things, and gave them their being, power, and mode of action. It proceeds on the assumption, which always is verified in the actual events of history, that this living God is greater than the world He has made, yet is always longing to impart Himself to the life of the world.

And the story of the Old Testament is simply the story of the striving of the living God to communicate Himself unto men, as light, as life, as love. What the religions of the world desired as a starting-point, the religion of Israel looks forward to as the goal. And this makes a great difference. For by this means we are enabled to preserve all the moral distinctions of good and evil, of light and darkness, which in the other event are obliterated. On the view of Israel, in the final consummation sin and evil are overcome, darkness and imperfection are destroyed, ignorance and separation have disappeared in the light of knowledge and in the glory of union between God and His creation. Death is swallowed up in victory, and tears and sorrows have had

their day, fulfilled their purpose, and shall vanish for evermore.

Ere we close this chapter we would add this other remark. The Hebrew conception of God, in Himself and in His relation to the world, while it shuts out all tendencies to pantheistic modes of thought, leaves room for that aspiration after the Divine, and for that longing after union with God, the centre and source of all being, which are the strength and charm of Pantheism. In fact, in all the more recent pantheistic schemes of thought we find traces of borrowing from the sublime idea of God embodied in the Hebrew Scriptures. Of this we shall speak later when we come to consider the developed conception of God.

VIII.

THE GREEK SOLUTION.

WE have already referred to Greece, and have stated generally the attitude of the Greek mind to our question. As the religion of Greece is, however, the only other religion which has a direct historical connection with Christianity, we may devote a few pages to a short description of its character and tendency. We cannot do this in detail; but a general conception may be obtained, which will be sufficiently accurate for our purpose. As Mr. Gladstone has observed, "We see in the Greeks, beyond all question, these two things—first, a peculiar and powerful element of Anthropomorphism pervading their religion, and giving to it a distinctive character, securing a remarkable fulness, clearness, subtlety, elevation, and precision in their conception of human nature, taking shape in, or at least accompanying, an immense vigour both of speculation and of action; a language of marvellous reach, elasticity, variety, and power; a really scientific excellence in art never elsewhere attained; and an eminence in the various branches of letters which has given to them, for more than two thousand years, the place of first authority in the cultivated world" (Gladstone's "Gleanings," vol. vii., p. 78). This witness is true; and the truth of it is sufficient to warrant us in devoting a few pages to the Greek solution of the problem of our knowledge of God.

At the outset it is apparent that the religion of Greece was developed by the people out of the primitive conceptions common to the Indo-European family. We take for granted that there were such common beliefs, and a common language which embodied them, ere the races separated from their ancestral home. We shall not here inquire how far the religion of the Greeks was influenced by other races in its earlier stages. For it is plain and manifest, what answer soever may be given to such questions, that the story of Greek religion and of Greek thought is mainly the story of an inward movement developed by the people themselves, independent of influences from beyond themselves. They had much in common with their kindred; but the peculiar contribution they have made to our knowledge of God is due to themselves alone.

Hebrew religion begins, as we saw, with God, with the story of a Divine action, with the Spirit that moved on the face of the waters, with the creative Word at whose command light and all the forms of life began to be, and were maintained in existence. Greek religion, on the contrary, begins with chaos, with a confusion in which all definition is lost. No doubt all the possibility of being and life lies latent in the dark and formless chaos. Germs of being are within the mass, and by chance or necessity, in one way or another, are evolved by degrees into the things we actually know. The Greeks have no conception of a creation. To attain to so high a thought would have been impossible without a sure knowledge of the living God. All definite existence was to them a product of something which went before. Behind all else, and underlying all particular manifestation of being, was the dark ground of nature, the source, rule, and origin of everything. What this in itself was is hard to tell. Nature stood over against

all particular forms of being, an inscrutable fate, determining everything—itself remaining undetermined. We might describe it in the words of Mr. Spencer as an inscrutable power, for ever unknowable. For the story of Greek life and thought began where Mr. Spencer begins, and the interest of the story consists in this, that the Greeks were able to overcome their starting-point, and to see how this inscrutable power actually became known to man.

The Greeks were able to attain to some measure of light and freedom and of spiritual insight. They fought their way out of the primeval conceptions, set themselves in large measure free from the dominion of the blind forces of nature, and came to some true knowledge of the Power in whom we live and move and have our being. Beginning with the powers of nature, like other families of the Aryan race, they fought their way to the conception of a kingdom of spirit and freedom and light. No doubt it remains true that they never attained to the conception of a Creative Word, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" but still they were able to reach the thought that light forced its way out of the darkness which imprisoned it, and attained to the manifestation of itself. Spirit and freedom overcame the powers of nature, and wrested their sceptre from them. The old nature powers were superannuated, retired into the background, and had no active part in the government of the universe. The development of Greek religion can only be understood when we remember that the nature powers form only the point of departure. Nature was given, the powers of nature are then to be overcome, and to be transformed into something higher, or thrust into retirement.

How great an achievement this was, we only learn when we contrast the Indian with the Greek mythology. In India

we hardly ever get beyond the powers of nature. Even the founders of some forms of religion become myths again, and the natural, physical attributes overcome the moral and spiritual. There is in Indian mythology no war of the gods, no overthrow of the Titans by the race of Zeus. In Greece, on the other hand, the nobler and more beautiful of the gods of Greek mythology developed themselves through conflict, through the conquest and overthrow of the Titans, of the rough and formless forces of nature. It was a great advance to displace the cosmogonical forces, and to enthrone in their room the presiding deities of political life and organized society. For the Titans are merely physical, natural existences, and have no spiritual or moral significance. The war with them, and their overthrow, represent the first great victory of the Greeks over the original nature worship they brought with them to their original home. Henceforth with them reason is greater than necessity, and freedom is better than fate.

Only through conflict and war can the nature powers be dethroned, and the spirit of light and freedom take their place. Here also we come into contact with one of the great achievements of the Greek peoples. They conceived the possibility of victory over the blind forces of nature. That they regarded the conflict as having taken place, not among men, but among the heavenly powers themselves, does not interfere with the great moral significance of this war of the gods. For it represents the victory which the Greeks themselves had already won, and the conflict through which they had gained this result. They were now able to conceive of themselves as standing over against nature; and their own moral and spiritual being were something higher and better than nature. The new gods are greater than the old because they have at-

tained to personality. They are not personifications of the forces of nature, which is simply the first stage of the progress of Greek religion. But the Greeks advanced beyond that stage, until the nature ground was left almost altogether behind. Almost, but not altogether; for there still cleaves to the deities of Greece some trace of the force from which they were developed. Zeus is the head of the new divinities, and retains his lightnings and thunder, and in some phases of his activity cannot be distinguished from the heaven overhead in its various manifestations of brightness and gloom. But Zeus is also the god who maintains the moral order of the world, is the protector of hospitality, and upholds the social world. Oceanus was only the elemental force of the sea, the personification of its massiveness and its restlessness. But Poseidon has become ethical. Wild and uncertain in his action like the sea, and so bearing traces of his origin, he yet becomes the god to whom is ascribed the building of walls and the production of the horse. So it may be said of almost all the personages which inhabit the Greek Pantheon. They have the marks of elemental forces, and in some respects never rise above their origin; but in other respects they shake themselves free, attain to moral and spiritual energy, and represent the highest qualities of Greek personal and social life. Helios is the sun, and continues to be the sun as a merely natural object. But the deification of natural objects could not long maintain its rule over the Greek intelligence. They transformed the sun, recognised as the source of light, into Apollo, the god of foresight and insight, who makes everything clear, in whose light everything could be discerned in its true nature and relations. The sun was the source of heat as well as the giver of light, and his influence on life and growth was apparent.

Instead, however, of the gross and impure conceptions which in other races attended the worship of the sun-god, the Greeks purified the myth of all its grossness, and Apollo became the healer and the strengthener, the god who exacts vengeance, and yet propitiates and purifies the children of men. The monstrous rites of Baal-worship had no place in Greece. Apollo himself is pure, and if he be anthropomorphic, it is anthropomorphism of the highest kind.

For it is to be observed that the gods of Greece are not abstractions, but concrete personalities of the most energetic kind. "Though the names and fundamental traditions of the several deities were wholly or in great part imported from abroad, their characters, relations, and attributes passed under a Hellenizing process, which gradually marked off for them special provinces and functions which appear to have been mainly original and indigenous, and to have been taken by analogy from the division of labour in human life and in political society. As early as in Homer, while the prerogatives of Apollo and Athene are almost universal, yet the Olympian community has its complement of officers and servants with their proper functions. Hephaistos moulds the twenty golden thrones which were automatically to form the circle of the councils of the gods, and builds for each of his brother deities their separate palaces in the deep-folded recesses of the mighty mountain. Music and song are supplied by Apollo and the Muses; Ganymede and Hebe are the cup-bearers; Hermes is the agent; Iris is the messenger; while Themis, in whom is personated the idea of deliberation and of relative rights, is the summoner of the ἐκκλησία, or great assembly of the Twentieth Iliad, when the great issue of the law is to be determined" (Gladstone's "Gleanings," vol. vii., pp. 51-52).

The Greeks were able in large measure to purify the myths they had in common with their kinsmen. They were led on to think of the gods as personal, and of the divine system as social. The gods are so far free as to find full scope for the bent of their nature; and over them all was the supreme rule of Zeus, whose rule, however, was not absolute, but conditioned in various ways. Behind him and all others lay the dark background of fate and necessity, which neither gods nor men could resist. The highest reach of attainment on the part of the Greeks did not advance beyond the conception of order and beauty, and their most noble conception of the divine left the gods they worshipped still entangled in the meshes of their natural origin. Nor had they any sure and well-grounded hope of the progress of the world. The return of chaos and of darkness was always possible, and the Titanic forces might again gather strength, and overcome the gods with whom lay the hope of the moral order of the world. For great as was their conception of the power and spirituality of the gods, it was not sufficient to transform completely the non-moral character of the physical forces, from which the gods had their first beginning in the thought of the Greeks. Both in the Olympian system and in the individual gods themselves the original non-moral element persisted, and came to light in strange unexpected ways.

It was scarcely possible for the Greeks to reach the thought of a divine purpose running through the ages, nor yet to regard the gods as fair, just, and right in their dealings with men. Their favour and displeasure were distributed at random. The gods were also themselves dependent, and behind them lay the fate which determined their conduct and character. We find traces, however, of a persistent struggle on the part of the Greeks to advance

beyond these imperfections, and to reach a rational order, and a source of harmony and beauty in the world and in human life. Slowly the nature myths become more pure, and were stripped more and more of non-moral qualities, until we reach the great conceptions of Apollo and Athene, and on the other hand men were exalted to divine rank, as the reward of work well done and of sorrows manfully borne. Sometimes, indeed, we find a solar myth so transfigured by the Greek mind that it can scarcely be recognized. Even where we can still trace the outlines of the myth, the story has been humanised so greatly that the myth can never explain it wholly. "The solar foundation of the mythus is wholly valueless and unimportant; in other words, is alien to its essence, when compared with the moral import it acquired among the Greeks. It is the conception of life-long service to duty, of strength combined with patience, of glory followed at the cost of ease, of godhead achieved by manhood through arduous endeavour—it is this that is really vital in the myth Herakles. By right of this the legend entered the sphere of religion and of art. In this spirit the sophist enlarged upon it when he told how Herakles in his youth chose virtue with toil rather than pleasure, incorporating thus the high morality of Hesiod with the mythical element. If myths like these are in any sense diseased words about the sun, we must go further and call them immortalised words, words that have attained eternal significance by dying of the disease that afflicted them. The same remarks apply to all the solar myths and lunar stories—to Achilles, Endymion, Kephalos, and all the rest. As solar myths these tales had died to the Greeks. As poems, highly capable of artistic treatment in sculpture or in verse, pregnant with humanity, fit to form the subject of dramatic presentation or ethical

debate, they remain of incalculable value. The soul of the nation was in them. And that is their value to us" ("The Greek Poets," Second Series, by J. A. Symonds, pp. 27-28).

Out of the rude and formless chaos, out of the elemental forces of nature, and out of the perplexities of human life, the Greeks contrived to shape a system of order and of beauty. Along the line of mythological development they reached the great conception of the personality of the gods. They did not deify abstractions, nor make gods of abstract unities of time or place or force. Whatever were the moral and physical limitations under which the gods lay, they were, according to the Greek conception, at least living, concrete, self-conscious beings. They represented the national striving of the Greeks after order, harmony, and truth; and mythology served at least to lift them above the abstract conception of the divine, which is only the empty notion of being in general. Those who believed in Zeus and in Apollo were nearer the truth and had a more adequate conception of the moral and spiritual order of the world than those who sought the source and explanation of life in physical substances or physical changes. The life of the people was in the mythology; it was only the speculative intellect which was interested in the dance of atoms or the results of blind chance. At all events many of these mythological characters gave to the Greeks splendid examples of human endeavour, of high devotion to duty, and of the victory of mind over matter. From these they learned lessons of abiding worth. If at times they revolted against the non-morality of these myths and rose in indignation against the caprice of the gods, that simply showed that they had again outgrown their more primitive belief, and were seeking for a faith more in harmony with their advanced intellectual and moral life.

Although they could not reach the conception of a personal god of power, wisdom, and goodness sufficiently great to discharge the duties of supreme governor of the universe, yet in moments of supreme endeavour and of high-wrought endurance the Greeks approached very nearly to that great and true thought. At such times the Zeus of passion and intrigue retired from view, was lost sight of, and Zeus, "the greatest and most glorious," was invoked with perfect trust, and his help was relied on as the supreme power who would cause all righteous enterprise to prosper, and would visit with punishment the evil-doer and the oath-breaker. As early as Homer this somewhat vague monotheism may be discerned; while in the later Greek poets it becomes more and more defined. The tragic element of Greek life and thought finds expression in this conflict between the underlying moral order of the world and the concrete manifestations of unrighteousness and wrong-doing in human history. A Hebrew could face the problem, recognise its gravity and wait for a solution, for he could say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But a Greek, who could not look up with unbounded reverence and unquestioning trust to the god of his worship, who could only make progress in knowledge, and find a ground for hope by a revolution among the gods and a dethroning of the ancient divine powers, was unable to ask such a question, or give the necessary answer in the affirmative.

The progress of Greek thought and life is marked by revolution after revolution. It is true, indeed, that the revolutions take place not on earth, but among the gods themselves. The ancient nature powers are banished, and a newer dynasty takes their place; but the real revolution is in the thought of the Greeks themselves. For a long time they strove to reach the divine by a process of

purification of mythological deities; and they failed to reach the goal by that path. Then began another and a more conscious way of reaching the end they longed for. Under the teaching of their poets, they came to larger thoughts of the moral order of the world. Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, each in his own way was a preacher of righteousness to the Greeks. Under their guidance the Greeks came to have a firmer grasp of the realities of life. They flourished in the time when Greek patriotism was at its brightest, and when there was more of a national life among them than there ever was before or after. So Æschylus took the ancient legends of his race and wove them into tragedies of the highest order. They became flexible in his hands, are filled with the fulness of all that had been achieved in Greek history and endeavour, and speak to that and all succeeding generations of law and order, and serene and inflexible justice as the foundation of the world. Sophocles also in his day taught his countrymen the worth and meaning of human life, and gave them a new idea of manhood and womanhood. These poets represented their countrymen, and gave expression to their deeper thoughts and higher aspirations, and reveal to us the advance of the Greeks in their knowledge of themselves and of the world and of the gods.

Thus the mythology and the poetry of the Greeks kept pace with their widening thought and deepening experience of life. In some ways the Greeks advanced beyond the other heathen nations of the world. We have already pointed out that the higher gods were not mere personifications, but were conceived to be persons with a certain fixed and independent will and personality of their own. Even at their highest and best, however, the characters of the gods only kept pace with the growing intelligence of the people.

They never rose above the ethical level of the time, and in some phases of their character fell far below it. It has been said with truth that the Greeks made their gods as they went on in the course of their history, and they certainly filled up the mythological outline with the fulness of their national life and achievement. Yet there is a great difference between the attitude of mind assumed by a people to supreme beings who are simply the reflection of the higher virtues of the national character, and the attitude assumed in the presence of a power who is regarded as high and holy, pure and spiritual, with a character and purpose of His own, which He always acts on and perpetually holds in view. In the one case there is no inflexible standard of moral conduct, no weight of personal holiness to weigh the people down or lift them up on the wings of lofty aspiration after wisdom, righteousness, and truth. The virtues of the gods are the virtues of the people, and their limitations and imperfections are theirs also. The demands made on the worshippers are not severe. They are only such as tradition and custom have sanctioned. When, however, the God whom a people worshipped is regarded as having a personal character and purpose of His own ; when He is not the mere reflection of the national character, but distinct and separate, having a steady moral purpose, directed to aims which He regards, and the nation does not regard ; when, in short, a nation has a God whom to worship and to serve demands a constant strain and moral effort, then there is a sure guarantee for moral and spiritual progress. In the one event the people have made their gods, and do not feel the reverence and adoration which belong to their worship. In the other event the nation feels that God has made them, not they themselves, and they fall prostrate before their Maker.

The limitations of nature, power, and office which lay on the gods left all the more room for the development of the conception of human freedom and independence. Particular deities could be resisted and overcome, and penalties by no means followed necessarily on want of obedience. For the particular deities never reached independence of the other deities of the system; at all events, supreme fate ultimately ruled them all. This phase of Greek thought was also national and characteristic. They were not unaware of the darkness and tragic mystery of life. Now and then they seemed to look for a moment at the coming twilight of the gods and the reign of chaos which would again return, or they would steadily contemplate the sufferings of Prometheus, and dwell with unimaginable pity on the pathos of that woeful story. The sadness and the pathos of human suffering are certainly present, not only in undertone as it were. The Norse myths force the suffering and despair to the front, and cause them to give expression to the woe, the wonder, and the hope of men. But the Greeks seem to veil the sorrow, and to cover up the gloom of life, and learn to think only of the bright, joyous, and pleasant aspects of the world. "To eliminate the mysterious and the terrible, to accentuate the joyous and the profitable for human uses, was the truest instinct of the Greeks." So their national life culminated and decayed, and their progress was only in thought and art, and not a progress of moral and spiritual life.

If neither by a purified mythology nor by a poetry unsurpassed in ancient literature, could Greece come to a knowledge of God, did she make any more progress towards that end by her philosophical speculation on the origin and causes of things? In course of time they had quite outgrown the mythological elements of their religion,

and could find no abiding solution of the problems of life on that line. They could not find a god of power, wisdom, and purity equal to the task of the government of the world. But the idea of a Cosmos or ordered world had taken possession of their hearts and minds, and ruled their conceptions. At all costs they kept hold of the order and harmony of the Cosmos, and instinctively turned away from the steady contemplation of the sin, despair, and disorder of the world. The natural boldness and keenness of Greek intelligence seems somehow to have been blunted in the presence of moral evil. They evaded its presence and dwelt with ever-increasing delight on those aspects of the world and of human life in which moral evil was least felt or perceived. Thus Greek art set itself to the representation of life and nature on its bright and sunny side. The shadows of death were left out of account, and all things were shown in the clear light of day.

No doubt there arose out of this very limitation a clear increase of life and strength. Leaving darkness and gloom in the background, and concentrating their strength on what was beautiful and fruitful of gladness, the Greeks were able to make for themselves a clear space for the dwelling-place of light, beauty, and harmony. By ignoring the mystery and the gloom of life, they constructed for themselves a fair world of beauty, and strove to make the most of the things which were in some sense fair and true and good. But the darkness and the gloom were not overcome; they were only ignored, and at any moment might invade the light, and chaos might come again. The little place of light, the fair and beautiful world of Greek art, was dearly purchased by the exclusion of the deeper mystery and agony of being. And there was needed, even in this sphere, where human work has been most perfect, a re-

cognition of the darker phases of human life and a direct acknowledgment of and victory over the forces of death. Art would not be equal to its task until the human spirit had won the victory over death. Death had to be looked at fairly, frankly, and consciously, and its dark possibilities explored and vanquished. Then art might come to its fulness, and become the expression of hope and expectation triumphant over pain. Greek art won the success it had simply by shutting its eyes to misery and pain. But pain is one of the most universal forms of human experience, and therefore what ignores it is only a passing phase of life, and cannot abide. While, therefore, Greek art remains as the most perfect expression of a beauty of a limited range, on a one-sided view of life, it could not be for any length of time a resting-place for the human spirit in its travail and labour, in this changeful world.

The bright and joyous beings embodied in Greek art, some of whom, even in the agonies of death, die with a smile on their lips, set forth the ideal of human strength and endeavour. These forms live in the pages of the poets and in the marble of the sculptor. They exert a strange fascination on subsequent ages. To all of us in some moods of mind, and to some people always, they represent all that is pleasant or desirable in life. Many have consciously striven to confine their life within these bounds, and for a little while, as in the Florence of the Renaissance, they have succeeded. But it could be no adequate dwelling-place for the human spirit, and the golden house and palace of art is soon shattered by the crash of elemental forces from without, or by the explosive power of the moral and spiritual forces innate in man. It is not necessary to deny that Greek art is itself a spiritual achievement of a unique and remarkable order, and a permanent gain to the human

family. But its limitations are so numerous, and its range of moral effort so limited that the human spirit can dwell in it only for a time, and must press onwards and outwards for a place of larger bounds in which it may find space and liberty.

The purified mythology, the literature and the art of Greece were great, and were full of spiritual elements. But the speculative thought of Greece was perhaps the greatest manifestation of Greek freedom and intelligence. As we remarked formerly in another relation, we find two great tendencies at work in Greek thought,—tendencies which have always reappeared in the history of speculative thought, and are quite alive at the present hour. At present many are inclined to regard the physical tendency of early Greek speculation as the proper type and model of fertile productive thought, and are disposed to regard the more spiritual philosophy of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as a reaction and a retrogression. On the other hand, some of the present leaders of philosophic thought find in Plato and Aristotle hints and anticipations of the later philosophy which, originating in Kant, has, according to them, found its consummation in Hegel. Into this great controversy we do not propose to enter. It is undeniable that in Socrates Greek thought reached a conception of divine energy and activity which, in some respects, advanced far beyond any other unaided conception of the human mind in regard to the nature of God. "In the case of Socrates it is beyond question, both from the most trustworthy records of his own conversations and even more from the developments, by his most devoted disciples, of ideas that they owed avowedly to his inspiration, that he gave the conclusive and determining impulse to a veneration for the Divinity—το θεῖον—as distinguished from and above the

mythological gods. The tone of his instructions was thus to give permanence to the previously fugitive monotheistic element of Greek religion, but by no means a presumptuous definition of form, and especially to attach to the recognition of it a sacred sense of absolute dependence and of moral responsibility" ("The Age of Pericles," by W. W. Lloyd, vol. ii., p. 300).

The Greek theogonies are closely connected with the dynastic wars of the gods; and as these gods were conceived to have a beginning in time, the Greek intelligence was driven to the recognition of a power behind and above these gods, which power ultimately was alone recognized as divine. The powers of evil and death were uncontrolled by the gods; though, on the other hand, the gods were supposed to be free from their dominion. This power or necessity, destiny, or fate never attained to freedom or personality in the Greek mythology. Fate works, but works blindly, without choice, freedom, or foresight, and remains as a dark unsolved enigma. The belief and thought of the people tended either towards the deification of an inanimate law of the universe ruling all, even the gods themselves, or towards the personal power of the gods, who acted either according to inclination or caprice, or according to the highest wisdom. And the alternative came to be whether they were to regard the gods as absolutely subjected to the power of destiny, or whether they were to raise their conception of the character of the gods, and enlarge it sufficiently to make their gods equal to the task of overcoming the blind fate which lay at the heart of things.

The Greeks grappled with this problem, and sought for a solution with a tenacity which was sublime. If they failed to find the solution, the cause of the failure was their

ignorance of the facts of the divine manifestation, and not from any want of thoroughness or of intellectual insight on their part. Socrates gave the impulse to the Greek mind which culminated in the speculations of Plato and of Aristotle. In his arguments and discussions on the nature of the gods he was ever ready to appeal to the general belief of mankind, and ever sought to deepen in mankind the feeling of reverence towards the divine. The Deity, Socrates held, could be known, if not in itself, yet in its works as a providence governing the world in freedom and in righteousness. Having once grasped the thought of a divine providence, and having distinguished the God who orders and holds together the world from the other deities, divine providence becomes more and more concrete to the apprehension of Socrates. The one Supreme God, who manifests Himself in the physical and moral order of the world, is not identified with the Zeus of the popular religious belief; and, indeed, Socrates seems never to have thought of the relation of this Supreme God to the gods of the people of Greece. He does not hesitate to use the names of the gods of the popular religion, nor does he hesitate to ascribe omnipotence and omniscience to them; but it would appear that the contradiction which emerges when his conception of the divine is extended to the hosts of the popular gods never became patent to his mind. The Divine Being only became concrete to his apprehension in the order of providence; but what the Supreme Being was in Himself, or in relation to the gods, whether we are to think of Him as personal or impersonal remains vague and undefined. What human thought saw through Socrates was the conception of a divine order in the world,—an order produced by the action of a God who orders and holds together the universal Cosmos.

With Plato this Supreme God is essentially the Good. Notwithstanding the number and variety of the writings of Plato and the abundance of topics intimately connected with our problem contained in his works, he appears to have studiously avoided direct statements upon the subject of the divine nature. He speaks in the "Timæus" of the difficulty of investigating and of finding the Framer and Father of the universe, and of the impossibility of expressing the idea of the Supreme Good in terms comprehensible by all. Other ideas might be expressed in intelligible terms, but the idea of God was so much greater than other ideas, that Plato avoids the attempt to speak of it in definite language. Now and then he comes closer to his problem, and the conception of the Demiurgus may be regarded as the highest thought Plato could reach on this subject. In language somewhat vague he shadows forth the place, sphere, and power of the Demiurgus. He is one, not merely an abstract unity, but one who has the power to think, to will freely, one who transcends the world, is separated and distinguished from the other deities of the world's system. Closely connected with the Platonic doctrine of the Demiurgus is his doctrine of Ideas. Our general conceptions, and the signs by which we express them, have their corresponding objects in the intelligible world. Ideas have, according to Plato, a real existence, and are the only things worth our knowing, the only worthy objects of thought. They do not change, they are one and the same always, and have an independent existence of their own. The things of sense are fleeting, dependent on space and time, but ideas are above space and time, independent of our conceptions, and belong to a world of their own. They are not even the thoughts of God, but the object of His thoughts, and form the rule

and method of His working when He shaped the void into a world of sense. God and ideas are the only things which really have existence, and the sensible world has existence only in so far as it partakes of the nature of the idea. Sometimes Plato goes so far as to name the ideas "Eternal Gods;" but he strives consistently to keep the ideas from attaining to an existence external to and independent of God. For he ever seeks to set forth God as the idea in which all other ideas have their root and ground. And the idea of God comprehends all other ideas; He is the One in whom all imperfect types meet, and are embraced in one unity. It would lead us too far afield were we to describe the way of the formation of the world according to Plato, or to count the number of intermediate agencies between the Supreme Idea and the world of sense, all of which are conceived to be present and operative in the formation and administration of the universe. The God of Plato is the Supreme Good; and this highest and most perfect Idea manifests itself in the intelligible world of ideas, and every idea presents some form or aspect of the good.

This monotheistic conception of the Divine, great and refined as it undoubtedly is, remains vague and undefined. There is no trace in his speculations of a living God, who is personally free and unconditioned. His God is at the best only a Demiurgus, who is not the creator, but only the maker of the world. His action is conditioned by a matter which is independent and pre-existent. He is but an artist, and his work is conditioned by the nature of the material he has to deal with. No doubt Plato reduces matter almost to nothingness, and leaves to it only the indeterminate possibility of existence. But even in this vague form it has substance enough to land the system of Plato in an irreconcilable dualism between idea and

matter. Along with this dualistic remainder there is also the pantheistic element of which he cannot get rid. All substance partakes of the Divine essence, and ultimately the sum of all existence is God. Both the world-soul and the human soul partake, in however inferior a degree, of the Divine essence. Nor is there in the system of Plato any possibility of freedom, either as a starting-point or as a goal for the gods or for men. The Supreme Good is helpless in the hands of fate. Much as Plato accomplished, and far-reaching as was his thought, yet the terrible destiny, which formed the undertone of Greek thought and life, stood unchanged as the background of his highest thought also. Destiny assigns to all things their limits, and presents even to God a limit over which He cannot pass. The Demiurgus and his working, ideas and their order, the supreme good and its purpose, are after all only playthings in the hands of this inscrutable Destiny, which, with unconscious elementary force, rules and determines everything. When analyzed to its elements, the deity of Plato is simply a function of the universe, ruled by it, not the ruler of it. At all events, the relation of God to the world does not, with Plato, rise above the conception of an artist or master-builder to whom his material is given, and who works under conditions.

On the other hand, the relation of God to the world is considered by Aristotle as the last end and final cause of the world. The deity of Plato is an intelligent power who knows the world, and works for the forming, ordering, and sustaining of the world. The Deity of Aristotle is pure intelligence, who is himself the object of his thought, and has no other object of thought than himself. God has not made nor formed the world, for the world is from eternity; but He is nevertheless the goal and crowning consumma-

tion of the world. All the efforts and strivings of particular beings are directed to this end; but this movement of the world is not controlled nor directed by God. Nature is so far independent that all her efforts and all forms of being within her are produced out of the immanent power within nature. The power within nature is constantly solicited and drawn forth by the existence of the pure intelligence whom Aristotle names God. But the pure intelligence is incessantly occupied with itself; and were the world or particular things to be the object of his thought or of his care, he would cease to be the changeless being he is, and would change from better to worse or from worse to better. This changeless intelligence sits apart, the object of all finite striving, yet himself unseeking, and not caring that he is sought.

With this as the fundamental thought of his system, Aristotle has lost hold of the thought of Divine providence; nor has he discussed the questions of whether goodness, justice, and freedom can be predicated of this pure intelligence; nor has the relation of God to the good and evil in the world much interest for him. The one predicate he insists on is that the Divine is a thinking being, who thinks himself. Of course it is difficult to win a way of conceiving of any possible relation of such a being to the order of the world or to particular beings. One of the latest commentators on Aristotle tries with all his might to surmount this difficulty, and surmounts it in characteristic Hegelian fashion. "The work of reason in thinking things suggests the question, How can immaterial thought come to receive material things? Only, it is obvious, in virtue of some *community* between thought and things. Over and above therefore passive reason, which receives, combines, and compares the various objects of thought, Aristotle recognises

a creative reason which *makes* objects of thought, which renders the world intelligible, and bestows on the materials of knowledge those ideas or categories which make them accessible to thought; just as the sun communicates to material objects that light without which colour would be invisible, and sight could have no object. Hence reason is as it were the constant support of an intelligible world; and Aristotle, while assigning reason to the soul of man, describes it as coming from without, and would seem almost to identify it with God as the eternal and omnipresent thinker. Even in man, in short, reason realises something of essential characteristic of absolute thought,—the unity of thought as subject with thought as object" ("Outlines of the Philosophy of Aristotle," by Mr. Edwin Wallace, pp. 92-3). Mr. Wallace in another paragraph thus sums up the Aristotelian conception of God: "God to Aristotle is the first of all substances, the necessary first source of movement, who is Himself unmoved; a Being with everlasting life and perfect blessedness, engaged in never-ending self-contemplation; acting on the world as the primary object of love, in which reason and desire fall into unity. The moral virtues are too dependent on material, bodily, and terrestrial conditions to be ascribed to God: but the perfect simplicity and immutability of His nature brings Him the purest and serenest pleasure" ("Outlines of the Philosophy of Aristotle," p. 73). In the introduction to his edition of Aristotle's Psychology, Mr. Wallace enters at length into the Aristotelian doctrine of creative reason, of which discussion it is only necessary here to say, that he has unconsciously brought to it, as it appears to us, the categories of the Hegelian philosophy. But we need not enter on the discussion. For taking it as Mr. Wallace puts it, we get no nearer to a true conception of God,

whether we regard Him as the first mover, Himself unmoved, or as the universal thinker, who has Himself as the only and exclusive object of thought, or as the goal and consummation of the world's progress.

It remains to consider what Clough has called the "Stoic-Epicurean" acceptance of the world. To this "Stoic-Epicurean" attitude many influences are now tending. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it is the starting-point of the work on "Natural Religion;" it underlies the statements of Matthew Arnold; and it is the goal to which Mr. Spencer's system of philosophy tends. We find a good and clear exposition of it in the volume of Mr. Symonds, from which we have already quoted. He tells us that it is desirable to recover this "Stoic-Epicurean" acceptance, and to face with meek serenity the problems of the world in which we live. The growth of rationalism and the removal of ancient beliefs by the discoveries of science have tended, Mr. Symonds tells us, to remove old landmarks, and made it necessary to win for ourselves a theory of conduct which shall be human, and which shall be based on our knowledge of nature. "Our vices and our virtues differ from those of the Greeks four centuries before the Christian era. It does not therefore follow that we have not some vices from which they were free, and that they had not virtues in which we are deficient. The real point to ascertain with regard to ourselves and to them is the basis upon which the conceptions of morality in either period have rested. Modern morality has hitherto been theological; it has implied the will of a Divine Governor. Greek morality was radically scientific: the faith on which it eventually leaned was a belief in φύσις, in the order of the universe, wherein gods, human societies, and individual human beings had their proper

places. The conception of morality as the law for man, regarded as a social being forming part and parcel of the Cosmos, was implicit in the whole Greek view of life; it received poetical expression from the tragedians; it transpired in the conversations of Socrates, in the speculations of Plato, in the more organised system of Aristotle" ("The Greek Poets," by J. A. Symonds, Second Series, pp. 384-5). Mr. Symonds finds that the Greek conception of morality obtains its highest expression in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. We quote his exposition: "Our consciousness reflects the order of the universe, and enables us to become more than automatically partakers in its movement. To obey this reason is the end of philosophy, the fulfilment of the purpose for which man exists. By doing so, we are in harmony with the world, and take our proper place in the scale of beings. Nothing can happen to us independent of this order; and therefore nothing, rightly understood, can happen to our hurt. If disease and affliction fall upon us, we must remember that we are the limbs and organs of the whole, and that our suffering is necessary for its well-being. We are thus the citizens of a vast state, members of the universal economy. What affects the whole for good is good for us; and even when it seems to be evil, we must hold fast to the faith that it is good beyond our ken. Our selfishness is swallowed up in the complete and total interest. Our virtues are social and not personal. Our happiness is relative to the general welfare, not contained in any private pleasure or indulgence of an individual caprice" ("The Greek Poets," pp. 386-7).

The first thing we note in these extracts is the antithesis between theology and science. It is assumed by Mr. Symonds that theology is unscientific, or beyond the scope of scientific method. He seems to be of the opinion, that

any process of reasoning, or any morality which has regard to the will of a Divine Governor, is *ipso facto* vitiated, and unscientific. Mr. Symonds is only repeating the current cant of our time. And their view is right and true, if the underlying Greek conception be true. If nature be all, and if there is nothing and no person beyond and above nature, then to live according to nature may be an adequate rule of life.

If, however, it be scientific to have regard to facts, and if the best theory be only a true explanation of the facts, then the Greek view of morality is radically unscientific. If the will of a Divine Governor be an operative factor in the history of the world, to refuse to acknowledge such a factor is not science; it is simply foolishness. The fundamental fallacy lies in the unconscious assumption made by Mr. Symonds, that to have regard to the will of a Supreme Governor is to introduce elements of uncertainty, caprice, and arbitrariness into morality, and to make morality altogether capricious. How they have reached this conclusion, or on what rational grounds they justify it, it is difficult to say. One can understand how Marcus Aurelius should strive to get rid of the thought of a Supreme Ruler of the universe, when he could get no higher conception of God than that reached by the thinkers and poets of Greece. One can understand how he should ardently desire to be free, even in thought, from the caprice of the gods. But that Mr. Symonds should think that faith in a moral order of the world is greater than faith in a moral ruler, or that nature is greater than God, is a fact sufficiently surprising. Is it a stronger spring of action to say, "Find your place in nature, and fulfil your function as part and parcel of the cosmos," or to say, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"?

We do not deny or seek to extenuate any real gain won

for us by the efforts of the Greeks. We rather affirm that there is a settled, physical, moral, and spiritual order in the world. We do not deny that man has his place in nature, and his duty as a member of the social and cosmical order; nor do we ignore that the world seems to have a principle of life and movement in itself. Affirming all these as true and undoubted, we none the less affirm that the rational explanation of the origin and purpose of the world demands an advance beyond anything we can find in the life and thought of Greece. The serenity which Mr. Symonds recommends is a serenity which is possible only when we wilfully shut our eyes to the mysterious and the terrible, and dwell exclusively on what makes for joy and gladness. There are facts of history which did not come within the knowledge of the Greeks, but which, on inquiry, might be accessible to Mr. Symonds. These facts are embodied in the literature of the Old Testament, in which we see God coming to the help of man, not merely by the moral order, beauty, and graciousness He has placed in the world, but in more personal ways, speaking words which people could understand, and doing personal deeds of mercy and redemption which manifested His thoughts and ways as the ordered world could not manifest them.

In what way the charge of being unscientific can be brought against this conception we confess we do not understand. It most certainly does not conflict with the conception of an ordered world, in which all things move and work according to law. "What a man sows that shall he also reap," is as true in the Hebrew conception as it is in the Greek, and it is also affirmed with even stronger emphasis. But then the Hebrew conception goes further than the Greek, and affirms the freedom, the intelligence, the personality of God, and refuses to say that the ordered

cosmos is the only way of divine manifestation. Is this the conception which is regarded as unscientific? A conception cannot be unscientific which is capable of verification by scientific methods. The theistic hypothesis may be, nay, has been verified in history and in the consciousness of men. And the fact of a real fellowship between God and man is as sure and true as any fact on which science builds. The opposite hypothesis obtains a semblance of truth only by ignoring a vast field of human experience, and by refusing even to look at it.

We may pay too large a price for the Greek serenity of mind, if we find we have to buy it at the cost of amputating all that side of our nature which looks up to God, and looks forward to eternal life. The Greeks themselves made the experiment for us on a large scale, and for a lengthened period, in the most favourable circumstances, and the verdict of history is that their philosophy could not bear the strain cast upon it by the burden of human hope and the aspirations of the human heart. Greek religion failed to meet the needs of Greek life, and Greek civilization vanished. Other thinkers were at work in the time of Marcus Aurelius with a brighter hope and a surer grasp of fact than he,—men who did not with calm serenity of mind look out with undisturbed equanimity on the perturbations of the world and on the misery of men, but who, with a passion of love and pity in their hearts, and with a firm persuasion of the perpetual presence and abiding love of the living God, went forth to right the wrongs, to remove the miseries of men. They rose to a height of impassioned goodness never seen within the Greek or Roman world. It was their theological conception which gave them their greatness and their power. So also their theological conception gave to Luther, to Calvin, to Knox, their mighty

power for good in the sixteenth century. And yet forsooth we are told that a theological basis for morality is unscientific. Well, so much the worse for science if this be so. But what is unscientific is the narrowness which neglects or ignores facts like these. It would be scientific to collect all the facts, analyse them, classify them, and ascertain whether, from a wide survey of the lives of individual men, and from a close examination of the facts of history, the divine action of the living God on the lives of men is really an operative factor in the progress of men. If it be so, as we believe it is, then the view which would frame a theory of human conduct without reference to God is unscientific, and unscientific simply because it refuses to deal with facts which properly belong to the subject of inquiry.

IX.

THE CHRISTIAN SOLUTION.

THE Hebrew solution, as we have seen, of our problem, was one mainly of hope. They trusted the Living God, and held fast to Him, in the full and clear conviction that, in the end, all perplexities would be removed, and in the light of God all things would be truly and harmoniously seen in true proportion and in fit relation. They were able to keep their thought of God, and to maintain their conception of Him as holy, just, and good; as almighty in power, of infinite wisdom and of supreme love, notwithstanding all the difficulties which surrounded their position. The grand and unique possession of Israel was in their sure knowledge of the Living God, who could speak to them, to whom they could speak.

The Greek solution, although it contained many valuable elements, did not issue in any clear conception of God, nor in any abiding results of value to the race. For their highest efforts of thought and their deepest strivings after purity were not able to transform the principle from which they started, nor were they ever able to reach the analysis which seems to have been given to Israel,—the supreme analysis which insists on the separation and distinction between God and the world. With them, the Divine continued to be entangled with the world, was only immanent

in the world, or attained only to an abstract independence, and, in any case, His being and action were conditioned by the world. Still they did emphasize the immanence of God in the world, and laid stress on one element which a true solution must account for, and to which it must have a special regard.

At all events, a true and adequate solution must recognise a closer connection between God and the world than we can obtain from the conception which looks on nature as a mechanism, fitted together by external means, for the expression of a purpose beyond itself. To the Greeks, the world had a soul, a living principle within itself, in virtue of which it could act, live, and work. And our later philosophy and science has this conception for its fundamental principle. To them there is a living principle in nature, and the beauty, the harmony, and the manifold inter-relations of things speak to them of an ever-acting, ever-living power, which is always near, ever sustaining, guiding, and moulding the plastic powers of the world to newer forms of higher life. If our later philosophy and science use the name of God at all, they for the most part use the term to describe the power which they recognise everywhere, in grass, flower, and tree, on earth and sea and sky, which also they recognise as the inexhaustible source of force and of life.

It is incumbent on us to recognise this habit of mind, and to recognise also that the Christian solution ought to contain in itself such a manifestation of the living power seemingly inherent in nature as will amply meet and satisfy all the reasonable expectations of all kinds of men. If we are unable to make room for the principle of the immanence of the Divine in nature, or if we cannot lay hold of the tendency which lies at the basis of the

evolution theory, whether of Darwin or of Hegel, and show its consistency with the Christian conception of God and His relation to the world, then it is clear that this tendency will pursue its own course, and, notwithstanding all logical and other difficulties, will rest contented with the solution set forth in the treatise on "Natural Religion." We are persuaded, however, that the Christian solution is true and adequate, for this among other reasons, because it has laid hold of and made its own, and set in proper place and relation the tendency of which we speak. There is a living principle at work in nature, there is a divine presence in the works of God, and there is in the Christian writings abundant evidence that the main thought of modern science and philosophy is a thought familiar to the writers of the New Testament. Modern science and philosophy will have done us a great service if it will force students of theology to go back not merely to the history of theology, but to the New Testament itself, to search out its meaning, to gather together and to set forth in order and method its profound teaching on the relation of God to the world.

That Greek literature and philosophy had a profound influence on Christian theology is a proposition which admits of no doubt. From the middle of the second century onwards there are abundant traces, both in the way of resisting its influence and of yielding to it. On the other hand, it is equally clear that Greek speculation has had little or no direct influence on the writers of the New Testament Scriptures. Their use of language, their peculiar terms, and their view of all great doctrines, have their origin, not in the use of Greek philosophy, but in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. The scientific exegesis of the New Testament has found, from lengthened experiment, that the

true way of reaching a consistent view of the meaning of the writers is to have regard, not so much to the history and meaning of words as these are shown in classic writings, as to the meaning of words in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Septuagint. A true exegesis has been led more and more to discard the influence of Greek philosophy as a factor in its interpretation. At all events, such influence is indirect, and for the most part the writers are unconscious of it. The categories, methods, and results of Greek philosophy cannot serve as guides to the meaning of the writers of the New Testament Scriptures.

It will not be necessary for us, therefore, to enter into the controversy, which is yet unfinished, regarding the relation of Alexandrian Eclecticism to the Scriptures of the New Testament. The place of Philo, and of the tendencies which culminated in Philo, in the history of human thought, is one of abiding interest. It was the first attempt at a fusion of Greek and Hebrew thought, an attempt to combine the earnestness, the moral power, and sublime intensity of the Hebrew with the speculative insight and calm serenity of the Greek. It represents also the first surrender of the Hebrew to the fascination of Hellenic culture. Without entering into detail, we may say that Philo's reconciliation amounts to a surrender of all that is distinctive and peculiar to the Hebrew way of looking at creation,—a surrender which was repeated by Maimonides, and in larger measure and in grander proportions by Spinoza at the beginning of the history of modern philosophy. These Hebrew thinkers brought to their speculations the natural characteristics of their race, as these were developed through a long and peculiar history, and unconsciously gave to nature what their national teachers ascribed to God. They took the attributes of God and ascribed them to the Cosmos, so

that their conception of the Cosmos is a greater, higher, holier thing than we can find in the pages even of Plato or of Aristotle.

We must content ourselves here with this brief allusion to Philo, and to the tendency he unconsciously represented. Neither the influence of Philo nor the Greek philosophy had any direct effect on the writers of the New Testament. And the New Testament solution of the problem of the knowledge of God is altogether independent of any help from Greece. Unless we mistake, however, we shall find that in the New Testament we have all the elements of a true solution, which gives to the Hellenic factor of modern thought the widest scope and the most abiding satisfaction. Philo and Spinoza present to us views which are inadequate, which leave to God no self-consciousness and no personality, while Paul and John present to us views which conserve at once the doctrine of God and man and of the world, and leave room for the widest research of science and for the strongest claims of religion.

What, then, is the Christian solution? It lies in the Christian doctrine of the Christ, of the place He holds, and of the work He does in the world. In the writings of the Apostles, we find in the foreground the statement that all things were created by the Word of God, are sustained by Him, and are tending towards Him. He is the beginning, middle, and end of creation. Where modern philosophy can see only the persistence of force or the evolution of an idea, where the Greeks could only find a reason or an abstract intelligence, there the apostles saw the presence and the working of the personal Word of God. The existence, the methods, the law, the working of created things are due to the living energy, wisdom, and power of the Word of God. To His creative activity the worlds owe

their being, to His sustaining activity their order and their progress, and to the energy of His love they owe it that they shall be brought into fellowship with God. True, indeed, it is that both in the Scriptures and in theology the larger part of both is taken up with the doctrines which set forth the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ in their bearing on the present state and ultimate destiny of man. With great earnestness, skill, and success theologians have toiled to set forth in systematic order the doctrines of Christ and His work in themselves and in relation to human needs. This work was the most urgent, and has a most exact relation to the questions which most imperatively demanded an answer. They are urgent questions still, and, while men continue to feel that they are sinners needing salvation, will continue to be so. But there are other questions which press on us with a weight unknown to our fathers. Under the stress and strain of the burdens of their life, they searched the Scriptures, and in them found that aspect of the revelation of Christ which suited their need, and gave them courage and endurance for life and work. It would appear that there is an inheritance awaiting us also in the revelation of the Christ. He bore the burdens of former generations; will He not bear our burdens also? To doubt it would be to prove false to the lessons of all recorded history.

May we then seek to lay on the Christ the burden of the reconciliation between science and religion? And may we venture to promise to the Agnostic, that, without the surrender of any vital principle of his creed, he will find in the Christ the guiding principle of the world's life, the creative impulse of science, the source and strength of all that is harmonious and beautiful in art, and of all that is good and true and heroic in human history? Is there

not in the doctrine of the Christ and of His mediatorial position as the Head of all created things, precisely that aspect of truth which meets the need of our time? The most prevalent conception of our time, and perhaps the deepest conviction of the scientific world, is the persuasion of the continuity of existence and the necessary relatedness of all phases of being. It is not likely that anything will shake the steadfastness of this conviction. Is it necessary that we should try to do so? If it could be shown that the man of science need not be called on to sacrifice the strongest convictions he has, nor in any way palter with his love of truth; if it could be shown that the artist's love of harmony, beauty, and loveliness is true and right; and that the moralist's persuasion of the supreme moral order of the universe is true and good; if it could be shown that all of these convictions can be held in harmony with other truths which are needlessly supposed to be inconsistent with them, then we shall have found the true reconciliation between religion and science, and our knowledge of the truths of science shall no longer be held to be incompatible with our knowledge of God.

It seems to me that this reconciliation is proved in the Apostle's doctrine of the creative and sustaining activity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This aspect of Him and of His work is not confined to any one of the writers of the New Testament. It is common to most of them. He is called "The Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14), the primary Source of the creation. It may not be possible to define precisely what the relation is which is here described as the Beginning of the creation of God, but that it is a relation of the closest kind is very evident. The relation is, of course, not physical or mechanical, nor is it to be regarded as if the Eternal Word were identified

with the world-soul of the Stoic philosophy. It is, however, of such a kind that the order of creation and its laws spring from Him who is its head, all its principles find their origin and goal in Him, "through whom also God made the worlds" (Heb. i. 2). More clearly does this appear in that passage of the Epistle to the Colossians which is thus paraphrased by Bishop Lightfoot: "He is the perfect image, the visible representation of the unseen God; He is the Firstborn, the absolute Heir of the Father, begotten before the ages; the Lord of the universe by virtue of primogeniture, and by virtue also of creative agency. For in and through Him the whole world was created, things in heaven and things on earth, things visible to the outward eye, and things cognisable by the inward perception. His supremacy is absolute and universal. All powers in heaven and earth are subject to Him. This subjection extends even to the most exalted and most potent of angelic beings, whether they be called Thrones or Dominations or Princedoms or Powers, or whatever title of dignity men may confer upon them. Yes; He is first and He is last. Through Him as the Mediatorial Word the universe has been created; and unto Him as the final goal it is tending. He is pre-existent and self-existent before all the worlds. And in Him as the binding and sustaining power, universal nature coheres and subsists" (Lightfoot on Colossians, p. 210).

A passage of this nature is well worthy of the serious consideration of thoughtful men at the present time. For at least there is this much shown by it, that the apostle is in full sympathy with the characteristic tendency of the present age, and, like the seekers after truth who live now, desired to unify our knowledge, and to see the world in the light of one great principle. Paul, too, desires to find the

synthetic bond, which will bind all force, all nature, all life into one organic unity; and as much as Mr. Spencer or as Hegel he seeks a principle which will help him thus to conceive the world as one; and he has found his principle and set it forth in the passage referred to, and in other passages of his epistles. The unity of nature and the greatness of creation are intensely felt by the Apostle, and in this feeling he is in perfect sympathy with the Old Testament, the writers of which always see the phenomena of nature under one great unity in the light of Him "who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters, who maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind."

The author of "Natural Religion" lays great stress on unity as the main element in religious thought and feeling, and the object of worship for him is the unity in the universe. He sees, indeed, that "nature suggests but a part, and the less important part, of the idea for which we are seeking an expression." He is constrained to widen the meaning of the word nature, and to bring within its meaning all that other people have meant by the word God. "For nature presents herself to us as a goddess of unweariable vigour and unclouded happiness, but without any trouble or any compunction in her eye, without a conscience and without a heart. But God, as the word is used by ancient prophets and modern poets,—God, if the word have not lost in our ears some of its meaning through the feebleness of the preachers who have undertaken to interpret it, conveys all this beauty and greatness and glory, and conveys besides whatever more awful forces stir within the human heart, whatever binds them in families and orders them in states. He is the Inspirer of kings, the Revealer of laws, the Reconciler of

nations, the Redeemer of labour, the Queller of tyrants, the Reformer of Churches, the Guide of the human race towards an unknown goal" ("Natural Religion," pp. 88-9). Yes, God is all that this eloquent passage describes Him to be, and more. Not to speak, however, of the impossibility of attributing all these qualities to nature, we wish now to show how the teaching of the apostles has anticipated all that, on this topic, the author of "Natural Religion" has to say.

For in the passage already quoted, Paul has revealed to us a greater and a grander unity in the universe than we have elsewhere been able to find. It is not the unity of a formal abstraction, but it is the unity of a rational principle, which gives coherence and subsistence to everything that is. This unity was dimly foreseen by the greatest thinkers of Greece, who were unable to give to it a complete expression. This, however, Paul is able to do, and he does it, not in a formal treatise, nor seemingly of set purpose, but because it was necessary for him to set forth what was true, in opposition to the false views beginning to be formed. This only serves to prove how great is the thought which finds expression in the Epistle to the Colossians. It is part of the doctrine of the Christ which the apostles held; and, when error arose, he only needed to set forth the truth regarding Christ in this new relation. So when speculations arose about the relation of God to the world, and, on the one hand, a number of intermediate agencies were placed between the Creator and the visible creation, and, on the other hand, a tendency was manifested to identify them, Paul had simply to extend the doctrine of the Christ in order to show how, by means of Him and His activity, God transcended the world, and yet was immanent in the world. For in Him "as the binding and sustaining power universal nature coheres and subsists."

Here, then, we find the possibility of meeting the claims of science in all its departments of work. When we take the simpler and more universal laws which govern the action of all material being, when we take, for example, the law of gravitation, which seems to bind the material universe into one, and place it side by side with the apostle's statement, we gain a new insight into the meaning of Old Testament words, "The strength of the hills is His also." In some fashion, by us not understood, the universal force which is manifest in the world is in the hand of Him "by whom all things consist." We do not here come into conflict with any datum or result of science. For the concern of science is with the force itself and its way of working, and not with the origin and cause of it. The apostle passes into regions where science cannot come, and enables us to give a rational explanation of the strength that is in the hills and of the life that is in the world. The forces of the world are rational forces, even those which keep the planets in their courses, and those also which appear in the instincts of the ant and the bee, and in the organized life of society. Thus, with the thought of the apostle in our minds, we can descend deeper and ascend higher than we can do under the guidance of the author of "Natural Religion;" we can lay the foundation of the earth in the activity of Him by whom all things consist, and can ascend to the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and see His perfected kingdom of peace and purity and blessedness.

Thus, then, there is a unity in the works of God; but the unity is not self-contained. It is not a unity caused by a great world-soul, as the Stoic and Pantheist thought. It is a unity which arises from the action of Him who alone is worthy to be called the wisdom and the power of God. He

who is the head, the source of the being and the order of the world, is also the head of the new creation. As Bishop Lightfoot says, "His mediatorial function in the Church is represented as flowing from His mediatorial function in the world. With ourselves this idea has retired into the background. Though in the creed common to all the Churches we profess our belief in Him as the Being 'through whom all things were created;' yet in reality this confession seems to exercise very little influence on our thoughts. And the loss is serious. How much our theological conceptions suffer in breadth and fulness by the neglect a moment's reflection will show. How much more hearty would be the sympathy of theologians with the revelations of science and developments of history if they habitually connected them with the operations of the same Divine Word who is the centre of all their religious aspirations, it is needless to say. Through the recognition of this idea, with all the consequences which flow from it, as a living influence, more than in any other way, may we hope to strike the chorus of that vaster music which results only from the harmony of knowledge and faith, of reverence and research" (Lightfoot on Colossians, pp. 182-3).

The recognition of this idea places us in a new relation to science and research. We can move with freedom among all the revelations which science is disclosing to us of the wondrous world in which we live. For the larger our views of the magnitude of the world, and the wider our conceptions of the order and beauty of it grow, the more exalted must be our thoughts of Him who has made and sustained the universe. We can yield ourselves with all loyalty to the guidance of science, suffer it to lead us into the wondrous grandeur of the world, and let it teach us the grand rhythm of law which makes all things to move in

harmonious order. We can accompany our great scientific teachers without distrust while they show us the law and measure and correlation of force, and disclose to us the constitution of the physical world. We can follow them with no reluctant step when they show us how all life is one in plan and outline, and each kind of life is related to all the kinds of life which are in the world. Nor ought we to mistrust or find fault with our scientific leaders when they seek to make plain to us the organic unity of the world, and the unity which also underlies the development of history.

Nor must they find fault with us when we bring to the results of their labours something which they cannot give us. We bring to science and its great results a higher thought than any suggested to scientific men by the phenomena of their more limited spheres of work. This is, indeed, what they themselves are doing every day. They are seeking a reason for law and order. They are not contented merely to observe facts, to make experiments, and to discover laws. The literature of the present hour teems with publications which have no other reason for their existence than to answer the ultimate questions which every discovery that widens the boundaries of the known ask in a more urgent manner. It is at this point where we must part company with them; and here we say that in the doctrine of the Divine Word we have the sure and certain answer to the ultimate questions of science and philosophy.

For the answers given by speculative science are confessedly untrustworthy. No sooner is a solution offered by any one school than its utter inadequacy is pointed out by another school, and all of them without exception do violence to the facts, and are utterly irreconcilable with our higher conceptions and holiest instincts. On scientific

principles it is our duty to take up the solution suggested by the Apostle Paul, and at least try how our scientific knowledge looks in the light of it. We have already seen how the doctrine of the Christ enables us to find a hopeful meaning in the religions of the world, and how it satisfies all the needs of man. If it be so in the sphere of human history, which is the most complex sphere of inquiry, shall it not be so also in the more limited sphere of strictly scientific work? The Christ is in the laws of the inorganic world, shaping them for life; the Christ is in the organic world, moulding it for spiritual life; and the Christ is in the spiritual world, binding it together into the one unity of the Kingdom of God, that "God may be all in all."

The Christ is set in the heart of the world's life, and in the fulness of time became flesh. The Pauline doctrine agrees with the Johannine, although John puts the matter in a clearer form. With John, the Logos of the Father is at the same time the eternal Logos of the world, through whom the Divine light shines into creation. The prologue to the Gospel according to John is rich in suggestion for the solution of our problem. In simple, sublime sentences John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God, all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." In these few words we have an account of the origin, progress, and purpose of creation. The Word of God is the maker of things, the upholder of all that is. And He is also the mediator between God and the world. It belongs to Him as the Eternal Word of God not only to have His home in God but also to have His home in the world. Thus to Him are to be referred the life and the order which are in creation,

and He is the ground and source of all reason in the universe, be it the unconscious reason in the physical world, or the conscious reason of man. All the powers of existence are instruments to carry out His will.

In what way and by what means the Eternal Word fulfils this activity we are unable to define. But it is plain that somehow the Logos is the life and light of creation. It is also plain from the teaching of science and philosophy that somehow man represents the unity of creation. He is the microcosmos in whom are contained the laws and tendencies of the world. In man are all the forces of the world, and in him they are embraced in a higher unity. If, then, in man are the consensus and reconciliation so far of all the opposite tendencies in the world; if in the unity of his self-consciousness opposing qualities are blended, then we see how the activity of the Logos in the creation has become the incarnation of the Logos in the man Christ Jesus. When the Word became flesh, He united Himself to the creation in a new way, and He communicated Himself to creation in reality and fulness. He was in all things that were made, moulding them and guiding them to a purposed end. He was in the aspiration of all human hearts, and is the goal of their aspirations. It would seem, however, as if His power and guidance were imparted to the creature from without and from above, and in a manner which was partly external. For not until the fulness of time could the Eternal Word communicate Himself to the creation, or enter with completeness under the conditions of created life. But in the fulness of time the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and the circle of being was made complete by the union of the Eternal Logos with the highest creature, and in Him creation has found its goal.

While the New Testament sets forth the creative and sus-

taining activity of the Logos in many parts of it, it yet does so in a summary way and without detailed exposition. The explanation may be that this was not the most necessary or most essential part of the doctrine of Christ which it concerned men most to know. At all events, the fact is that most of the New Testament is directed to the exposition of the doctrine of Christ in relation to sinful men, and to a history of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Now if the New Testament contains a real revelation of God, these truths are certainly the most important for man to know. And it is not wonderful that their exposition occupies the larger part of the New Testament, and that the burden of it should be the proclamation of the Christ as the Revealer of God and the Saviour of sin-laden men. Obviously also it was to be expected that the Church would lay stress on the topics which had received a detailed exposition in the pages of the New Testament. While, therefore, in Scripture and in theology Christ is set forth as the Revealer of God and the Saviour of men, it is in these respects that we are first to seek for a verification of the doctrine of the Christ in the history of the world and in the lives of men. In our time, all truth is subjected to a stringent verification; at all events, there is a theoretic claim to that effect. Sometimes, indeed, theories attain a wide circulation, and are acted on, even while their advocates admit that they cannot receive a complete verification. Passing from that, however, we submit that the doctrine of the Christ as the Revealer of God and the Reconciler of man to God, has been verified, and has received a larger proof and a more complete verification than any scientific theory in vogue now-a-days. The law of the conservation of energy, after all the illustrations and confirmation it has received, is incapable of proof, and is held mainl yon the ground of

scientific faith. The theory of evolution, which year by year obtains a greater number of advocates, is held and believed, not because it has been proved, but because it enables men to look at life as a unity. It is still a matter of faith and not of knowledge.

Now our contention is that the action, the influence, and the power exerted by the Lord Jesus Christ on men for these nineteen centuries can be plainly traced and abundantly verified. He brought to the nations a wider thought of brotherhood than they had previously known. He revealed to them a Kingdom of God in which there was to be no distinction of race or kin, in which there was to be neither male nor female, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but all, of whatsoever colour, race, or people, had the right of citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. He gave them a new pattern of life and a new measure of purity, and also a new motive to inspire them and a goal which might be reached.

Notwithstanding the imperfections and corruptions and sins which have disfigured the history of Christendom, it yet remains true and undoubted that Christianity is a living historical proof of the action of the Christ on the lives of men. Many attempts have been made to reduce the history of Christianity to the level of ordinary history, and men have refused to acknowledge in it any higher rule or achievement than may be found, say, in the history of Greece and Rome. Let us take such a work as "Gesta Christi," in which Mr. Brace gives the history of human progress under Christianity, and we find in it a detailed proof of the influence of Christianity on the practices, customs, laws, and morals of the European nations, from the first to the nineteenth century. Or take such a work as the treatise on Christian Ethics by Bishop Martensen of Denmark, and we find in it a powerful statement of the indirect influence

which Christianity has wielded even over those who maintain an attitude of conscious opposition to its direct claims. By its influence they have been set free from many superstitions and from many degrading vices, and though unconscious of the debt they owe to Christ, they are indebted to Him notwithstanding. The Spirit of Christ is in the air we breathe; and the institutions amid which we live are moulded and pervaded by the influence of Christ.

This appears more clearly when we examine the direct testimony of the Christian consciousness. This is a fact which is on the level of science, which may be tested and ascertained by the use of the most rigorous scientific method. It is not necessary to bring it to the test of the individual consciousness, though that test may also be used. For the Christian consciousness has embodied itself in life, in history, and in literature, and stands in the history of Christendom as a series of facts level to the comprehension of all. What is the cause of this unique thing, which we find in Christian life and literature? On the face of it, it professes to be an impassioned attachment to One who lived and died eighteen hundred years ago, who rose again from the dead, and liveth and worketh to-day. The literature of Christianity proceeds on the assumption that Christ is a person who can give help and sympathy to sorely tried people in the perplexities of life, who can deliver from evil, and give wisdom and guidance in the hour of need. And the testimony of millions is, that they have really got from Him the sympathy, the help, the wisdom, and the guidance which they sought. A true hypothesis is one which will explain and account for all the facts, and this assumption of a living Christ in living fellowship with men to-day is the only explanation which seems to bear any relation to the facts of Christian life.

Any other explanation we have ever seen simply ignores the facts, or explains the facts as due to an illusion. Plainly, however, the theory of illusion will not serve for an explanation. For one thing, the people who say that they owe the renewal of their life and the inspiration of their hope to the action and influence of the living Chist, can show a real result in their purified life and changed character. They are, besides, sober-minded people, who bear themselves wisely and manfully in all relations, and their character and conduct show no signs of an illusive influence. How are we to account for a purified life of a community? How are we to account for the changed habits of men? Of the facts there cannot be the slightest doubt, and the cause assigned bears all the scientific marks of a *vera causa*. To-day it is true, as it has been true through all the ages of Christianity, that an attachment to Christ purifies all the springs of action, quickens men to a larger life, and sends them to live lives of purity and self-denial and active beneficence. We submit, then, that here is a phenomenon well worthy of the strictest investigation of science. The Christian explanation is that the Christ is a living Person who can help and guide and purify human life to-day, and this explanation has been verified a thousand times and in a thousand ways.

If then the direct influence of the living Christ on the race, on separate nations and communities, and on individuals, is a proposition which can be verified now and here; if, further, this influence is of a kind so rare, so powerful, and so personal as cannot be accounted for by any other supposition than that Christ is a living person who works still, then we have other results to follow of an important kind. The verification we have obtained from an examination of history and from an examination of the Christian conscious-

ness will give us confidence to seek the verification of the action of the Eternal Word in other spheres also. From the action of the Living Christ as it can be traced in recorded history, we go back to learn all that it is given to us to know of the person, work, and sphere of the Christ in the world and in His relation to God. We have a good foundation for our search in what we actually know of His influence on human life. We know that He has rescued men from the dominion of evil, we know that He has roused them to impassioned goodness; we know that He has inspired them with a passionate love of truth, and a hatred of lies, with passionate resistance of oppression and wrong-doing, and with an ardent longing to relieve suffering, to right the wrongs and remove the burdens of the heavy laden. These are statements capable of the most exact verification.

We pass from this historical influence of the living Christ to study the influence and action of the Christ which lie outside of recorded history. We find that those who knew Him best foretold the nature of that redeeming power which He was to exert on human life. They foretold it simply because they knew Him, what He was, whence He came, and for what purpose He took on Him our human nature. Because they knew these things regarding Him they were able to complete the circle of His activity, and to show that He was not only the mediator between God and man, but He was the uniting bond of inorganic matter, and the moving principle of the organic world. We have only to prolong the curve and complete it to find that great principle of unity which science and philosophy has ever sought, and sought in vain. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." He is the wisdom in whom the foundations of the world were laid, the reason which the

Greeks sought for and dimly saw in the very heart of things; and He is the abiding principle of providence in the world. Nay, He is also the person whom the Greeks sought for amidst the wars of the gods; and their highest conception of the gods was a dim foreshadowing of the great reality which has its complete expression in the Christ.

It may not be so easy to trace the activity of the Logos in the working and in the sustaining of the world as it is to trace the working and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ in the history of Christendom and in the lives of men. It is possible and may sometimes be right to neglect the study of causes and origins, and to confine ourselves to the study of facts, with a view to obtain the laws of their working. It is not in this sphere that any collision can arise between our scientific knowledge and our religious life; our complaint is that science neglects or forgets to take into account facts the number of which is quite incalculable. Let science have regard to all the facts, and the antagonism will cease to be. Our proposition is to substitute for the "unknowable" and "inscrutable force" of Mr. Herbert Spencer the action of One whom we know. If we carry this thought with us to the works of Mr. Spencer, we are enabled to lay hold of all the vast miscellaneous information he has gathered, and to use all his positive gain for our own purposes. The real achievements of science and philosophy will serve as illustrations of the activity of the Eternal Word in His relation to the world. We have only to substitute for the power which Mr. Spencer does not know the action of the Power we know, and all the known relations of the "unknowable" at once become the action of Him, "in whom was life, and the life was the light of man." There is no more difficulty in verifying the action of the Logos in nature and in history than there is in verifying the action of the "inscrutable

force," the transformations of which, according to Mr. Spencer, have made the universe. We have, however, this advantage, that we can pass from the Eternal Word to the worlds He has made, without sustaining that shock to our intelligence which almost paralyses us when we attempt to pass from the "unknowable" of Mr. Spencer to the known world.

We have also this other advantage. We have a sure and certain ground of hope for science and for humanity. We may, without losing hold of any rational faculty we possess, understand how non-living matter adapted itself to the use of all forms of life, how simple forms of life were succeeded by more complex forms, how on the basis of the physical and organic world arose the structure of intelligent, moral, and spiritual life. On the ordinary theory of evolution we lose hold of all rationality, and allow ourselves to sink to the level of those for whom arbitrariness and chance rule the world. From mechanical causation only chance results can come, and any one result satisfies its causation as well as another. When, however, we bring the teaching of Paul and John to the facts and the gradation of being on which the theory of evolution attempts to found itself, they are at once illuminated by a higher, purer light. In some way unknown to us, these facts illustrate for us the mode of action of the Eternal Logos, which is also the Logos of the world. The world could organize itself, because the Logos was in the world, and the genera and species of living things could successively come into existence, because on them was the Divine compulsion of Him who made the worlds and appointed for every living thing its place in the sphere of being, its nature, and the laws and conditions of its life. Thus we find a sufficient explanation both of the permanence of living things and of the progress to forms

of being more and more complex. We have still indeed to make our own science, to ascertain, classify, and place in order the facts and laws of matter and of life. We have to find out the natural order of creation, and to make our theory correspond to the facts under the stern compulsion of nature herself, which exacts tremendous penalties for our failures. But we cannot without intellectual confusion proceed on the supposition that the principle of progress is in things themselves. We might possibly conceive of permanence as an inherent principle in things which have once attained to being. And, on the other hand, we might conceive of endless change as an inherent law of things. But the unique union of permanence and change which we call progress from less to more, from the less complex to the more complex, from the less perfect to the more perfect, is inconceivable apart from intelligence and purpose. Such a progress has been attained in the history of nature, and the researches of natural history have been a demonstration of the fact. Evolution itself is based on the supposition of progress, at least up to the present time, and it prophesies hopefully of the future.

As our historical investigations proceed, and our knowledge of the past history of men widens year by year, we find that in this sphere also there has been progress of a marked kind. In the European nations and among Christian peoples the social and political and personal virtues have made giant progress. So much has this been the case that the principle of classification has itself been changed, and we have no hesitation in reckoning among the vices which tend to disorganize and destroy society some qualities and actions which our ancestors reckoned among the virtues. As we have already said, we can trace these changes and that progress historically to the Christ. The

testimony of history is plain and unambiguous to this effect. The Christian world is a world of love because it has found the Christ, and the possibility of progress is not exhausted, for He liveth to guide the nations onwards and upwards to a greater and a higher attainment yet.

To sum up our argument in this chapter. We have made only one assumption,—an assumption amply justified on historical grounds. We have assumed the influence and the activity of the Lord Jesus Christ as a living factor in the historical progress of the nations; we have sought to indicate where the proof and verification of His influence may be found. We have shown that in the objective facts of history, as well as in the Christian consciousness, we have the living action of the Christ. From this we apply the knowledge we have received from Christian history to the times which were before the historical coming of the Christ; and in the striving of the nations after truth and light and love we have found the traces of His activity. From history we have only to prolong the inquiry backwards into nature, and we shall find in the history of the organic world and in the wondrous story which science tells us of the evolution of all forms of living things, the influence and the action of the Word of God. The striving and the struggle and the groaning of creation obtain a larger meaning, "for the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." The Word of God was in the organic creation as a great striving. Still backwards we are free to pass, and to find in the phenomena and laws of the inorganic world the first beginnings of the work of Him in whom the Creator and the creation meet. And so the whole creation is bound together in the one unity of the Divine Word; God lives and moves in all, and in Him all things live and move and have their being.

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds
More strong than all poetic thought;

"Which he may read who binds the sheaf
Or builds the house or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

TENNYSON: *In Memoriam.*

X.

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD.

"I HAVE long thought that without an eternal Logos you must have an eternal cosmos; and I therefore suspect that a mono-personal Theism is impotent against the Pantheist. So that since the controversy has passed from its old atheistic phases, I doubt if either Deist or Socinian or Mohammedan will be able to cope with the Pantheist. In short, I doubt if any but a Trinitarian can do so adequately. [How does the admission of an eternal Logos negative an eternal cosmos?] I don't so clearly *see* it as I *feel* it. But if God had not always a Son, He must have always had a world, and if He had always a Son, personality and conscious life, with reciprocal love, must have always existed. We at least get out of the Nirvana, or the Indian sleep of Brahma. Besides, the doctrine of an eternal Logos harmonises with the notion of a God essentially active and perfect within himself" ("Colloquiæ Peripateticæ," p. 96). Thus Dr. John Duncan, that deep and subtle thinker, of whose great thoughts so few have been preserved, expressed the issue before modern thought a few years ago. The issue has become plainer since then, and what he calls mono-personal Theism has, in one of its most able and eloquent advocates, postulated matter "as a datum objective to God." And even with the aid of this dualism he has

fought a losing battle. For the solitary god of his imagination is a god without love, and has no object of love save this objective datum.

It is not our purpose here to set forth the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, nor to defend it. This has already been done to our hands in the great dogmatic treatises of our own and former times. What we seek to do is simply to show that the Christian conception of God is worthy to take its place beside and above any conception of God yet formulated in human language or conceived by human thought. The conception of God which theology has been able to grasp does, indeed, set forth the doctrine of Scripture, but only in an imperfect fashion, as theologians are themselves the first to confess. The truth is that the development of theology is a development up to the Scriptural conception of God. Nor has the statement yet reached the height and depth of the sublime doctrine of the Living God contained in the Scriptures. God is, as Dr. Duncan said, "perfect within Himself." In the Godhead there are personality, conscious life, and social life. There are mutual love, intercourse, and communion in God, and there are abiding distinctions in the One God.

We note the great conception of the fatherhood of God which is made emphatic in the New Testament. The traces of this conception in the Gentile world are physical, as among the Jews it was national. But in the Christian conception the Fatherhood of God is spiritual and personal. And Fatherhood is declared to be a permanent feature of the nature of the Living God. It implies also a spiritual and personal relation of sonship in the Godhead, and further implies that the mutual love and holiness of Father and Son find expression in the Holy Spirit, also in personal form subsisting. "In the unity of Him who is One, we

acknowledge the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the interaction of whom we see love fulfilled." Into this divine and sacred fellowship created life is received, so that our fellowship may be with the Father and with the Son. Fearlessly the Scriptures speak of God as the giver and sustainer of a life like His own; and of man as capable of receiving God, and of God as willing to give Himself to man. For man is created in the image of God, and the Son of God is also Son of man, and, therefore, the Creator and the creation may be one in spiritual and personal fellowship.

When we have regard to the simple, sublime statements of Scripture, and seek to form our conception of God according to them, we find that the highest words of Scripture are these three: God is Spirit; God is light; God is love. We venture to transcribe the statements of Dr. Westcott on these three sentences :—

"(1) God is spirit. The statement obviously refers to the Divine nature and not to the Divine personality. The parallel phrases are a sufficient proof of this. God is not 'a spirit' as one of many, but 'spirit.' As spirit, He is absolutely raised above all limitations of succession (time and space) into which all thoughts of change and transitoriness are resolved.

"(2) God is light. The statement again is absolute as to the nature of God, and not as to His actions (not 'a light' or 'the light of men'). The phrase expresses unlimited self-communication, diffusiveness. Light is by shining; darkness alone bounds. And, further, the communication of light is of that which is pure and glorious. Such is God toward all finite being, the condition of life and action. He reveals Himself through the works of creation which reflect His perfections in a form answering to the powers

of man, and yet God is not to be fully apprehended by man as He is.

"(3) God is love. In this declaration the idea of 'personality' is first revealed, and, in the case of God, necessarily of a self-sufficing personality. The idea of God is not only that of an unlimited self-communication, but a self-communication which calls out and receives a response, which requires the recognition not only of glory but of goodness. And this love is original and not occasioned. It corresponds to the innermost nature of God, and finds its source in Him and not in man. It is not like the love which is called out in the finite by the sense of imperfection, but is the expression of perfect benevolence" (Westcott's "Epistles of John," pp. 160-1).

Holding fast to the conception of God set forth in these three sentences, and refusing to be entangled in discussions about the absolute and the infinite, we obtain an idea of God which satisfies every demand of the intelligence and every claim of the heart. We are not led away by abstractions, we are in contact with concrete realities. We learn that in His innermost being God is spirit, light, and love. He gives Himself and has in Himself love in the giving and in the receiving of it. He is Himself at once the object of love and the response which love gives to love. In the One Godhead we have the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and in the prologue to the Gospel according to John the interaction of Divine energy and love is described in itself and apart from any relation to the world. For in these opening verses the relation of the Word to God is a relation of love, and the personal energy of the Word tends ever towards God, and He Himself is God. He is the Word, and the Life Eternal who has His home in God, and through whom He is manifested to the world in creative

and redeeming energy, and by whom creaturehood has attained fellowship with God: "The life was manifested," "The Word became flesh." Thus we find at the basis of the Christian conception of God not "mono-personality," to use Dr. Duncan's expression, but personality in relation. Not a solitary God, but a social God is the God whom Christians worship, one God, and yet a God who is His own object, and who does not abide in solitary isolation separate and apart, but in the fulness of living energy can both give and receive love within the perfect social unity of the Godhead.

Taking this conception thus roughly outlined, we proceed to compare with it what modern thought calls "the developed conception of God." We believe that nothing less than the full-orbed developed conception of God as it is given us in the New Testament will suffice to cope with and to overcome the subtle Pantheism of the present hour. From this point of view, Biblical Theology is the best apologetic. Arguments based on mere theism fall short of the mark, and can neither convince nor persuade those whom the negative spirit holds in bondage. For on all sides the tendency is to Pantheism. Materialism and Deism have had their day, and are effete. We avail ourselves of the words of Dr. H. B. Smith to describe this tendency:—"In the Pantheistic unbelief, philosophy, as though conscious of its full power, asserts its absolute supremacy. By the assumed universality of its principles, by the undeniable comprehensiveness of its aims, by the vigour of its logic and the steadiness of its processes; by its high ideal character, by its claim to be the result of the concentrated thought of the race, and to contain in itself all that is essential in the Christian faith, and to give the law and the explanation to all other sciences; this system seizes with an almost demoniacal power upon minds that would laugh to

scorn the dreary fantasies of the East, that see the rottenness of bare Materialism, and that feel something of the inherent might of Christianity. Never did a philosophy take such an attitude towards the Christian faith; it does not make it a superstition as did Atheism; it does not neglect it, as does our popular philosophy; it does not scout its mysteries, as does our irrational common-sense; nor does it attenuate it into a mere ethical system; but it grants it to be the highest possible form of man's religious nature, it strives to transform its grandest truths unto philosophical principles; it says that only one thing is higher, and that is Pantheism. It claims to have transmuted Christianity into philosophy, and to stand above it, triumphant, dominant, exultant. And thus it is the most daring, subtle, consistent, destructive, and energetic philosophy which ever reared its front against the Christian faith. It has the merit of recognising the grandeur of Christianity; it has the audacity to boast that itself is more sublime. It professes to have systematized all thought; to have possession of the aboriginal substance and the perfect law of its development; to be able to unfold all our ideas in their right connections, and to explain nature, mind, art, history, all other philosophies, and also Christianity. All this, it says, is but the unfolding of its own inner life. It weaves its subtle dialectics around everything, that thus it may drag all into its terrific vortex. It has a word for almost every man excepting for the Christian established in his faith. By the very extravagance of its pretensions it seduces many; by its harmony with the life of sense it attracts those who love the world; and by its ideal character it sways such as would fain be lifted above the illusions of sense and the visions of imagination and the contradictions of the understanding into a region of rarer air,

where reason sways a universal sceptre. Its system includes all things. God is all things, or, rather, all is God. He that knows this system knows and has God. And it claims that it thus gives a higher idea of Deity than when He is limited by a definite personality; assuming, without any philosophical ground, that person is in its nature finite and cannot be connected with infinite attributes. It professes to give man a system which shall make him wise, and it is with the oldest temptation, Ye shall be as gods. Thus does philosophy, in its most daring mood, accept the alternative; and it gives us the choice between Christ and Spinoza. And this is the alternative of our time" (H. B. Smith, D.D., "Faith and Philosophy," pp. 10-11).

The years that have elapsed since Dr. Smith wrote these memorable words have served to confirm their truth and their far-seeing wisdom. The alternative is clearer now than when he wrote. For now science has in its speculative aspect entered the field, and its solution of the problem tends ever towards Spinoza. And the latest aspect of philosophical inquiry, the Hegelian revival in Britain, has taken the exact position which Dr. Smith prophetically foretold. Speaking of the Hegelian philosophy, Professor Edward Caird says, "Such idealism has a close relation to Christianity; it may be said to be but Christianity theorized. It has often been asserted that Hegel's philosophy of religion is but an artificial accommodation to Christian doctrine of a philosophy which has no inherent relation to Christianity. If, however, we regard the actual development of that philosophy it would be truer to say that it was the study of Christian ideas that first produced it. What delivered Hegel from the mysticism in which the later philosophies of Fichte and Schelling tended to lose themselves, and led him, in his own language, to regard the absolute 'not as substance

but as subject'—what made him recognise with Fichte that the absolute is spiritual, and yet enabled him with Schelling to see in nature, as the opposite of spirit, the very means of its realization,—was his thorough appreciation of the ethical and religious necessity of Christianity. In the great Christian aphorism that 'he who loses his life alone can save it,' he found a key to the difficulties of ethics, a reconciliation of hedonism and asceticism. For what this saying implies is that a spiritual or self-conscious being is one who is in contradiction with himself when he makes his individual self his end. In opposing his own interest to that of others, he is preventing their interests from becoming his: all things are his and his only who has died to himself. But if this be the truth of morality, it is something more, for 'morality is the nature of things.' We cannot separate the law of the life of man from the law of the world wherein he lives. And if it is the nature of things, as it is the nature of spirit, that he who loses his life shall save it, the world must be referred to a spiritual principle, and the Christian doctrine of the nature of God is only the converse of the Christian law of ethics" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xvi., p. 102).

Dr. Smith did not mention one possibility in the passage we have quoted. It evidently did not occur to him to suppose it possible that any phase of pantheistic thought should ever suppose itself to be identified with Christianity. For pantheistic systems have contented themselves with explaining Christianity, and by showing how it could be taken up in the vaster philosophy they had discovered. Professor Caird claims that the system of metaphysics he expounds is "Christianity theorized." It is so theorised that no one can recognise it. He has laid hold of one of the Christian principles, a most important principle no doubt

and extended its application indefinitely. But the conception of nature as the opposite of spirit, and the very means of its realization, brings in something which is quite foreign to the nature of Christianity. For Christianity regards the Eternal Spirit as perfect, as in Himself "the ever-blessed God," not requiring nature or any other for His realisation. To the Christian, God is the fount of being, the source of all life and goodness, and there is in Him no becoming or imperfection, and, therefore, this theorizing of Christianity must be rejected as essentially opposed to Christianity.

Further, as this spirit comes to the realization of itself only through its opposite, through nature, it can become self-conscious in no other way than through this conflict of contradictions. In other words, the universal spirit has no self-consciousness as such; it comes to consciousness only through particular beings. We do not know what may be the goal of the Hegelian philosophy, nor whether in their view the universal spirit shall ever attain to self-consciousness. We have never been able to find out. But whether it be so or no, certainly this strange conception bears no resemblance to the Christian doctrine of the Living God. Nor can we find any place in this philosophy for Him for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things. He is lost and swallowed up in the endless toil of the negative. And His personal work for man and with man becomes part of the whirl of an impersonal idea, that circles by imperative necessity through all the grooves of change. Nor is there much light to be obtained from the great formula of which Professor Caird speaks, when he describes what he regards as Hegel's great discovery, the absolute looked at "not as substance but as subject." For by this way of looking at the absolute, or by this way of regarding the Living God, He ceases to

be self-sufficing, and an object becomes necessary as the co-relative of this subject. The contents of the one will soon be equivalent to the contents of the other. The Scriptures regard the Living God as one who has His object within Himself, and the statement of Dr. Duncan quoted at the beginning of this chapter stands good.

Our purpose at present is not to criticise the metaphysics of Professor Edward Caird. As metaphysics we do not touch it here; our purpose is to state some reasons why we cannot accept his metaphysics as theorised Christianity, or, indeed, accept it as Christianity at all. No doubt it deserves a more detailed treatment than we can give it. For it is a phase of thought which for many reasons has a great fascination for many minds. It is, however, but a passing phase for all that, and has this drawback, that it can scarcely be stated in intelligible language. At all events, if Christianity is to be theorised, it must be in another way than this. It must be in some way which will conserve the facts, and permit us to recognise in the theory some resemblance to the history and the doctrines of the New Testament. It is possible that we shall never be able to make our theory large enough to include all the facts of Christianity, but even in that case it is better to wait for further light, than by our theory to make all that is vital in Christianity become mere factors in an ambitious theory of knowledge.

We pass to the consideration of a question which bulks largely in almost all works of the Agnostic kind. In our second chapter we spoke at some length of personality. We refer to what we have said there, and take it for granted in the present discussion. Although the methods of science and philosophy are such as leave no room for personality, that does not prevent them from bringing forward, whenever we venture to speak of a known God, the objection

that personality is a limitation, and cannot be applied to the absolute. It might be answered that, according to their method of work, personality cannot be applied to the relative. For whatever personality be, it lies outside of, and has obtained no recognition from science or philosophy. Not to insist on this, however, let us look fairly at the objection. It occurs so frequently in all sorts of books that it is worth our while to look at it. Here is the objection as set forth by the author of "Natural Religion":—"Personality entire has never been attributed in any theology to deities. Personality, as we know it, involves mortality. Deities are usually supposed immortal. Personality involves a body. The highest theologies have declared God to be incorporeal. May we then fall back upon the will and say, Theologies attributed to deities a will like that of human beings? But again the highest theologies assert that the Divine will is high above the human; that there is no searching of it; that as the heaven is high above the earth, so are His ways than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts" ("Natural Religion," p. 16).

The writer begs the whole question when he says, "Personality involves mortality." How does he know? He can only affirm this when he denies the immortality of man, and not till then. Suppose man immortal, and the statement falls to the ground. Suppose, too, that we know a living One Who has died, and is alive for evermore, and the question equally falls to the ground. Let us turn the argument round, and apply it to the questions discussed so eloquently in the pages of "Natural Religion." Truth, we should say, if we were to speak of it in the spirit of the foregoing quotations, is an opinion in the minds of men. Truth, as we know it, involves the exercise of man's thinking powers, which are dependent on the body

of man. But man is mortal, and has a body, and, therefore, truth cannot be absolute; nor can it be worthy of the supreme devotion of the soul of man. No doubt the author of "Natural Religion" would make short work of such an argument, and would at once show the fallacy of the statement about truth. But the statement serves to bring out the fallacy in his own argument. Is it the essential note of personality that it be mortal, or corporeal? Is it not, on the other hand, the characteristic mark of personality that it is self-conscious, has intelligence, will, affection? Nor is there any difficulty in conceiving personality to subsist and to persist beyond the changes of death and the grave. Weak as all his illustrations are, the weakest of all them is that which refers to the highest theologies which assert that God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts. For the highest theologies say that God has thoughts; and thoughts imply a thinker, as ways imply one whose ways they are. However high and transcendent the thought of God may be, and however different His ways from the ways of man, yet to the highest theology they are still thoughts, and, according to the passage quoted, are claimed by God in express terms as "My thoughts." Instead of personality let us read intelligence in the foregoing extract. No doubt such a change would be an advantage to his argument. For it is possible to regard intelligence as an abstract quality of being, while personality refuses to be so handled. But even on those terms might we not say that intelligence is mortal, is corporeal, and, therefore, we cannot extend its action beyond the range of purely human activity? It may easily be shown that if we accepted his argument against personality, we shall be bound to extend it until the whole fabric raised in his work is cast down to the ground.

The somewhat rough and popular mode of statement on

the part of the author of "Natural Religion" is expressed in a more subtle and comprehensive manner by Mr. Spencer. In his argument he takes full advantage of the concession of Dean Mansel, who had said, "It is our duty, then, to think of God as personal; and it is our duty to believe that He is infinite." This gave Mr. Spencer an admirable opportunity of protesting against admitting a "radical vice" in the constitution of things; and Mr. Spencer made full use of his opportunity. He will not "believe that there is eternal war set between our intellectual faculties and our moral obligations;" and then he proceeds, "This, which to most will seem an essentially irreligious position, is an essentially religious one—nay, is *the* religious one to which, as already shown, all others are but approximations. In the estimate it implies of the ultimate cause it does not fall short of the alternative position, but exceeds it. Those who espouse this alternative position make the erroneous assumption that the choice is between personality and something lower than personality; whereas the choice is rather between personality and something higher. Is it not just possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending intelligence and will as these transcend mechanical motion? It is true we are totally unable to conceive any such higher mode of being. But this is not a reason for questioning its existence; it is rather the reverse. Have we not seen how utterly incompetent our minds are to form even an approach to a conception of that which underlies all phenomena? Is it not proved that this incompetency is the incompetency of the Conditioned to grasp the Unconditioned?" ("First Principles," p. 109). Mr. Spencer in this passage uses freely the large wealth and vague possibilities of the unknown. It is quite possible that in the unknown there may be higher modes of being than we know. But it is not open to Mr. Spencer to

make use of the possibility of these. For his own procedure in his philosophy has been, not to use the highest modes of being which we know to explain the lower, but the opposite. He may not be allowed to use the retort he has used, for his own philosophy is the condemnation of it. He postulates nothing but force and its persistence, and from these he undertakes to explain all science, all philosophy, all nature. But this force is certainly a lower thing than intelligence and will and consciousness, and the alternative he rejects is the one he must accept. The alternative is between personality and something lower, and can be nothing else, if we are to judge of what the alternative must be from the philosophy of Mr. Spencer.

The reasonable course is to exhaust the higher powers and forces known to us, and to make use of all available means to obtain an intelligible view of the world before we take refuge in the wealth of the unknown. And surely if Mr. Spencer has been able to accomplish so much as he thinks he has done with the help of one postulate alone—if force in his hands in itself and in its applications has grown to the goodly dimensions of these portly volumes, surely when we call on the forces of will, consciousness, and intelligence to help us in the building up of a world, we shall accomplish more than Mr. Spencer has done. He formally objects to speak of the ultimate cause as intelligent because the ultimate cause may be something higher. He really does not attribute intelligence to the ultimate cause because he has found that the only thing needed is the persistence of force.

Mr. Spencer has carried his analysis back to what is final for him,—the antithesis between the known and the unknown, or, to speak more accurately, between the knowable and the unknowable. Then he stops and insists that

there is no further progress that way. We suppose that a number of people will decline to take Mr. Spencer's word for this. He confessedly cannot tell whether there is a way or not. He has taken his position in a dogmatic fashion, and were we to inquire into the reasons why he took his stand here we should get no reasonable answer. For on inquiry into the reasons of his procedure we find that he ought, on the same principles, to have taken up his position a good way removed from his present standpoint. If these reasons are good for preventing people from penetrating further into the charmed circle of the unknowable, they are equally good for the denial of all knowledge whatsoever. And Mr. Spencer must take his stand on necessary and eternal ignorance.

Men have therefore not listened to the voice of Mr. Spencer. They proceed to look at the limits which he calls the Unknowable, and to look at the action of the force he has labelled the "Inscrutable." And they have found open paths, and the known forces of intelligence, will, and freedom at work everywhere in the sphere which Mr. Spencer calls the unknowable. They find that when they apply the forces they know in themselves and in history to the problems of nature and to the problems of our knowledge of God, they are fit and adequate for the explanation of them. While Mr. Spencer is telling us that we shall never know anything save the known manifestations of the unknowable force, behold this unknowable force has become known to us, and we find that our own personality is akin to Him who is the Maker and Upholder of the worlds. It is certainly not easy to understand how the inscrutable force which lies at the basis of existence according to Mr. Spencer should become the self-conscious force which I recognise in myself. On the other hand, if we

take the Christian conception of God, as One who can be in some measure the known and obeyed and loved, we fill up the dark inscrutable background of being with the living God, who has come forth to manifest Himself to us, and to speak to us words we can understand, and do deeds of kindness and of love.

We must, however, come to somewhat closer quarters with the argument which is current in many quarters at present. We mean the argument that personality is a limitation and therefore cannot be applied to God. This argument passes from pen to pen; it drifts downward from the more learned to the less learned, and passes outwards in ever-widening circles until we find it everywhere to-day. It is a convenient phrase, handy, compact, easily launched at an opponent, and warranted to do execution. Personality is a limitation, it is true; and in what sense is it true? Before, however, we answer the question we shall listen to a word of exhortation from Mr. Graham, the author of "The Creed of Science," who in a calm, benignant mood counsels us to submit to the inevitable, or, to put it in an Irish fashion, advises us "to commit suicide to save ourselves from slaughter." "Theology," he tells us, "may dislike the seemingly pantheistic notion, and may refuse it for a time; but in the end she will accept it. And there are evident proofs, notwithstanding a tacit agreement to ignore the fact and an unwillingness to acknowledge it, that even the most dogmatic Churches can, with time, slowly change and accommodate their theological conceptions. Development is possible even within the most dogmatic Christian Church, notwithstanding the very narrow range allowed for it by the dogma of infallibility. The advance of knowledge and the wider vision of truth can still infuse fresh life into the old religious doctrines; they can still 'wake a soul under the

ribs of death ;' to which, of themselves, petrified scholastic propositions and metaphysical dogmas respecting God so surely tend. And there is no manner of doubt that the imperative necessity is being felt and silently accepted by all theologies desirous of preserving a continued life, of re-shaping their conceptions of the Creator, His ways and His works, more in accordance with the great revelation vouchsafed to men through the scientific discoveries of the past three hundred years.

"In particular this conception of God will not suit the theology which insists on ascribing to Him the attributes, at once metaphysical and specially human, of personality and consciousness ; the former being the precise one that is so difficult to get any clear conception of even in ourselves, and both, especially consciousness, being, as Fichte and other philosophers have irrefutably demonstrated, inapplicable and directly contradictory to the notion of an absolute being. For consciousness and personality, whatever else they imply, clearly imply the notion of limits and conditions, neither of which can, without contradiction, be applied to an absolute and unconditioned Being, to a transcendent, tremendous, and universal Power, the chief fact in our knowledge of which is precisely its freedom from all the limits which govern and bind our finite being" ("The Creed of Science," pp. 363-4). The quotation shows how even men who write on such high topics as "the Creed of Science" may unthinkingly repeat, and repeat without examination, what they have received from others, and which has passed without question in the circles in which they themselves move. There is no more hackneyed quotation than the one "personality is a limit" while God is illimitable. Where is the contradiction, where is the inconsistency of applying the two ideas to the same being? It

would be contradictory to speak of a round square, but there is no contradiction in speaking of a white or a crimson square. So the adjectives personal and absolute are not logical contradictions, nor are they contradictory in fact. When we speak of the absolute we speak of it as a predicate of pure being, and what we mean is simply that the absolute is complete in itself, it has no conditions save the conditions contained in itself. When we speak of personality we ascribe it to being, regarded as pure spiritual being; and we simply mean that absolute personal being is and must be self-conscious, rational, and ethical; must answer to the idea of spirit. Why may not the absolute Being be self-conscious? To deny this to Him would be to deny to Him one of the perfections which even finite being may have.

But the truth is that Mr. Graham is under the bondage of the "scientific discoveries of the past three hundred years." We do not in the least seek to disparage the greatness or the fruitfulness of the scientific work of recent times. But it is possible to make too much of them. For there are questions on which these discoveries have thrown no light whatsoever. As much was known about contradictions before they were made as since, and no new light can come from that quarter to tell us anything of the nature of pure being or what attributes we may venture to ascribe to it. For all the discoveries of science are simply finite, and relate to matters within the bounds of time and space. The contradiction can only emerge when the attempt is made to conceive of spirit by a conception derived from space considered as boundless. It may be conceded that boundless space cannot be conceived as personal. But an infinite spirit is entirely different, and the theology which Mr. Graham invites to an euthanasia has discovered this long

ago. "God is not space filling by way of extension; God is not extensive, but intensive, because God is spirit.

Mr. Graham is kind enough to inform us that personality and consciousness have been demonstrated to be contradictory to the notion of an absolute being. Fichte is the philosopher he especially mentions. Fichte's achievement in philosophy is not great, and has had no permanent influence on more recent investigation. We may set over against his opinion the views of men whose work has been greater, and whose influence is likely to be more lasting. Let us take Ulrici, or, as our space is waning, let us take Lotze, who has really and seriously argued this question.*

* We quote the following summary of his results, which have been laboriously won through many pages of masterly investigation:—"Selbstheit, das Wesen aller Persönlichkeit, beruht nicht auf einer geschehenen oder geschehenden Entgegensetzung des Ich gegen ein Nicht-Ich, sondern besteht in einem unmittelbaren Fürsichsein, welches umgekehrt den Grund der Möglichkeit jenes Gegensatzes, da, wo er auftritt, bildet. Selbstbewusstsein ist die durch die Mittel der Erkenntniss zu Stande kommende Deutung dieses Fürsichseins, und auch diese ist keineswegs nothwendig an die Unterscheidung des Ich von einem substantiell ihm gegenüberstehenden Nicht-Ich gebunden.

"In der Natur des endlichen Geistes als solchen liegt der Grund, dass die Entwicklung seines persönlichen Bewusstseins nur durch Einwirkungen des Weltganzen, welches er nicht ist, also durch Anregung des Nicht-Ich geschehen kann, nicht deshalb, weil er des Gegensatzes zu einem Fremden bedürfte, um für sich zu sein, sondern weil er auch in dieser Rücksicht, wie in jeder andern, die Bedingungen seiner Existenz nicht in sich selbst hat. Diese Beschränkung begegnet uns nicht in dem Wesen des Unendlichen; ihm allein ist deshalb ein Fürsichsein möglich, welches weder der Einleitung noch der fortdauernden Entwicklung durch Etwas bedarf, was nicht es selbst ist, sondern in ewiger anfangsloser innerer Bewegung sich in sich selbst erhält.

"Vollkommene Persönlichkeit ist nur in Gott, allen endlichen Geistern nur eine schwache Nachahmung derselben beschieden; die Endlichkeit des Endlichen is nicht eine erzeugende Bedingung für sie, sondern eine hindernde Schranke ihrer Ausbildung" (Lotze: *Mikrokosmus*, vol. iii., pp. 575-6).

Lotze has not, as Mr. Graham has done, settled a question of such momentous issues in an off-hand way. Nor can it be settled by a series of repetitions of an opinion based on no investigation, but first assumed by one, and then borrowed by others. Lotze's work must first be examined, and his position subverted, ere this glib conclusion can be maintained. Lotze's contention is that "personality does not depend upon a present or past contraposition of the ego to the non-ego;" on the contrary, the possibility of such a contraposition arises solely from the fact of personality. The only distinction which is necessary for self-consciousness is not that of self and not-self, but the distinction between a thinker and his thought. The question has got into a state of utter haziness through the endless talk of philosophy about self and not-self, about subject and object, so that it is difficult to get face to face with the plain and simple issue. When we brush aside the metaphysical and psychological verbiage which surrounds the question, and really get into close grapple with it, we find we have, each of us, a direct feeling of self. The knowledge of self may grow as all other knowledge grows, but the feeling of self is as much present in the child as it is in the grown man. What is the cause of this feeling of self, and of the consciousness of self-identity across all the waves of change? The occasion of the manifestation is found when we learn to distinguish what is not self from self, when, in short, by reason of the distinction between other things and ourselves, we become conscious of self, and mere consciousness becomes self-consciousness. Through the contraposition of the not-self, the self becomes aware of itself, and when once this self-reflection has occurred, then the self-conscious spirit becomes its own object.

It is no doubt true that in a finite spirit the development

of personal consciousness takes place under external influences; but even in this case self-consciousness is not begotten through the influence of external factors, it is the result of the action of the finite spirit itself, in its struggle and reaction against the conditions of its environment. It cannot be maintained, however, with any pretence of reason, that conditions are causes, or because the finite spirit attains to self-consciousness through the struggle with the non-ego, that it is therefore a product of its conditions. With finite spirits, self-consciousness is a growth and development, because they are dependent spirits. But the notion of self-consciousness does not necessarily involve the idea of development. Given a self-consciousness in one who is capable of a self-existence, which needs neither initiation nor continuous development by means of anything alien to itself, but maintains itself in an eternal movement within its own essence, and, as Lotze observes, we have then the true notion of self-consciousness; and this is not limitation of self, but realization of self.

Our self-consciousness is developed, yet that is no reason why all self-consciousness should be so, any more than the fact that an existence is derived is a reason why all existence should be derived. But the pantheistic notion which Mr. Graham commends to us speaks of a Power which is underived, self-existent, with all the fulness of being in itself. We grant all he says affirmatively about this Power, and we go further and say this Power would be imperfect, yea, more imperfect than man, were it not conscious of itself and of its own perfections. By saying of the Power who made the universe that it is a self-conscious power, we only say that the infinite source of all life, intelligence, and activity exists for itself and knows what it is thinking and doing. Is this to make it imperfect, or to ascribe to it any limita-

tions? It is strange that any one should think so, more especially Mr. Graham, who, without knowing the consequences of his position, has departed from the teaching of Spinoza, and has introduced into the systems of his masters the utterly alien conception of "purpose." Spinoza knew what he was about when he tabooed purpose. For once admit the idea of purpose, and mechanical necessity becomes an inadequate method, and you reach at a bound the knowledge of the purpose on the part of the agent who makes and upholds the world, and from that to self-consciousness there is only one step, a step which must logically be taken.

Fichte made the dogma, and others have repeated the dogma that the infinite cannot be personal without limitation. Lotze, has shown, on the contrary, that full personality is possible only to the infinite. For the infinite alone has full and perfect knowledge of itself. We do not know ourselves perfectly or completely. Many parts of our nature are obscure to ourselves, and we have not supreme control over ourselves, nay, we are driven whither we would not, and ourselves are unknown to ourselves. This is only to say that we are imperfect beings, who neither in personality nor in anything else have attained to perfection. But where self is, who has perfect knowledge, perfect control over itself, and perfect activity, then there may be full personality, but not till then. No other conception of the infinite is tenable for a moment except that which regards it as perfect in power, in wisdom, in self-knowledge, and in self-control.

Thus then we are constrained by reason itself to ascribe perfect personality to the infinite and absolute. And this ascription is in accordance with the lessons which are taught by the history of creation itself. Science teaches us

to see creation mounting up by successive steps from non-living to living matter, from the vegetable world to the animal world, from the animal world to man, to personal beings who attain to some knowledge of themselves. Science shows us a universal tendency of life towards personality; it seems to be the law of life. How explain this tendency to personality, and how explain the crowning achievement of life, persons in relation to each other forming a society, in which love strives to reign, if there is at the heart of things only an impersonal principle? This were only to flout reason and to give us an unintelligible world.

The curious thing is that it is in the interests of the greatness and the grandeur of the ultimate Reality that Agnostics proceed to deny any real affirmations regarding it. Yet Mr. Spencer quotes from Dean Mansel, and quotes with approval the following sentence:—"It is obvious the Infinite cannot be distinguished as such from the finite by the absence of any quality which the finite possesses; for such absence would be a limitation." We admit that this sentence occurs as one of a series in the logical gymnastic exercises of the Dean. But then it has an unusual quality of depth and clearness of insight in it. So much is this the case that we have only to follow it to be safely led out of the Agnostic mood. Let us follow it. The infinite is all that the finite is, and more. The finite is living, conscious intelligence, and the infinite is living conscious intelligence on an infinite scale and in an absolute degree. Beauty, harmony, love are in the finite, therefore the absence of them in the infinite would be a limitation. No doubt, in forgetfulness apparently, Mr. Spencer proceeds to say that to ascribe living conscious intelligence to the infinite is fetichism of the lowest order. It is passing

strange. The infinite may possess all power, may be the source of all law, may impress itself in rhythmic order on all the domains of being; and yet if the infinite knows itself, if we venture to think that it can speak and manifest itself to the brightest creature it has made, then Mr. Spencer lifts his hands in pity over the blindness which can think a thought so unworthy of the dignity of the infinite. On the whole we prefer to follow the guidance of the luminous sentence quoted from Dean Mansel.

Let us seriously ask the question, Does the ascription of life, intelligence, personality to God militate in any degree against the dignity of the Infinite? Our Agnostic friends seem to be really anxious on this point. It may not be out of place to remind them that the reverence they profess towards the unknown power which is in and beyond all phenomena has been borrowed from the reverence which Christians feel towards Him who dwelleth in light which is inaccessible and full of glory. While we affirm that our knowledge of God is true and trustworthy, we by no means affirm that it is adequate or exhaustive. "We know in part," and in the end, when we have come to the limit of our knowledge, we cast ourselves prostrate in adoration before Him and say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." But even then we go on to affirm, "For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever, amen." The reverence they feel for the unknowable Power cannot equal in depth or fervour the reverence felt in the presence of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. But this is a God who can be known, and known because He has manifested Himself, in nature, in history, and in redemption.

Mr. Graham recommends to us, as a larger, wider thought, "the conception of Spinoza, reproduced by Goethe and Spencer." And he recommends it thus: "This conception of a grand Reality, whose phenomenal projections in space and in our consciousness alone are knowable, is a great as well as philosophical conception, and probably that with which all thinking men will finally close as the worthiest that finite faculty can frame of Deity. It has the merit of reconciling *most* of what science has been teaching, with all that philosophy—whose special business it is to decide upon the question—has yet been able to agree upon. Further, and this is important, it satisfies the demands of the imagination, as shown by its general acceptance by imaginations of the grand order, as those of Goethe, Wordsworth, Shelley, Carlyle; it falls in also with the instinctive beliefs of the human race, which at bottom, and even in its own blind wisdom, both believed in God and acknowledged His final incomprehensibility" ("Creed of Science," p. 360). It is rather sad that Ulrici and Lotze among philosophers, that Browning and Tennyson among poets, that even Carlyle and Wordsworth, have broken the harmony, and have definitely refused to take their place amongst the thinking men who, according to Mr. Graham, will finally close with the Spinozistic conception as the worthiest that man can form of Deity. Another Hebrew than Spinoza had a conception, which he thus expressed: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: He calleth them all by names; by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth." Nay, the conception of the Hebrew prophet finds in the magnificence of the world only a fresh tribute to the greatness of the Creator: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting

God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not nor is weary? there is no searching of His understanding."

We claim for the Christian conception of God the merit of reconciling all that science has really attained to, with all that the truest philosophy has won regarding the ultimate problems of human knowledge. We have seen that the Christian conception of God meets and brings into unity all the tendencies of life in its striving upwards to the consciousness of itself. We have seen that it is the answer to the travail of the nations after truth and light and duty; that in its full-orbed completeness it has also met and solved for man, or given to man the hope of a solution of all the problems of thought and life which have perplexed the minds and tried the spirits of the most thoughtful of our race. And it accomplishes this without the sacrifice of any of our holiest instincts, without the thwarting of our highest purposes, and without the loss of our highest aspirations. The Christ has set His seal on these also. "If it were not so, I would have told you." And the Christian conception of God gives us the assurance of perpetual progress in life, in love, and in knowledge, and the promise of a time when "that which is in part shall be done away," and "I shall know even as also I have been known."

FINIS.

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