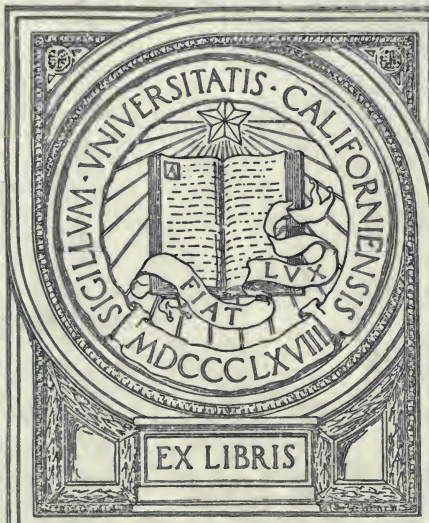
MODERN THOUGHT



ISSUES OF THE AGE;

OR,

Consequences Involved in Modern Thought.

BY

HENRY C. PEDDER.

"Everything that we now deem of antiquity was at one time new; and what we now defend by examples will at a future period stand as precedents."—*Tacitus.*

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PREFACE.

The contents of this volume being intended as a contribution toward the better understanding of modern thought, and the consequences which must necessarily result from the peculiar intellectual type of the age, it needs no exhaustive preface to explain the cause of its production. As a sufficient reason for its conception and birth, it is enough to say that it proposes to indicate rather than exhaust the nature of those problems of life and mind by which we are, in the present day, so abundantly surrounded. An uneasy, restless searching after something broader, deeper, and more satisfactory, is the predominant characteristic of the present age; and in view of this, it seems to us that it is the duty of every reflective mind to devote at least some attention to so important a subject. How far such a result may be accomplished in the following remarks, time and experience alone can determine. The *intention* is, however, a good one; and as such we can confidently recommend the following pages to those who are disposed to bestow an unprejudiced and thoughtful consideration on questions which are obviously of such vast importance: believing also that, although the searching analysis and skeptical spirit of the present age may cause many years' sojourn in the wilderness of perplexity and

doubt, we are nevertheless certain in the end to enter the Promised Land and find peace.

In this view, therefore, should the accompanying thoughts answer the purpose of oases in what may seem to some a desert of negation and unbelief, they will amply have fulfilled their mission.

Lastly, we can only say, should it be found, as we think it will, that the ideas embodied in the different chapters deal with the silent depths of the soul, rather than the noisier but more superficial conditions of feeling, and also pertain to the serenity of intelligence, rather than the turmoil of irrational prejudice, it is hoped that they will, for this reason, be all the more welcome to those who, after many intellectual wanderings, have at last learned to realize a grandeur and usefulness in those transitional stages of thought and feeling which seem inseparable from the conditions of human existence, and which at the same time indicate so powerfully that man's destiny is progressive.

Brooklyn, August 24, 1874.

INTRODUCTION.

CERTAINLY if there ever was a time in the history of the human race when the spirit of the age was fairly indicative of restlessness and change, there can be no doubt that the present tendency of modern thought affords us many of the most general and most striking illustrations in this direction. True to that spirit which has actuated thoughtful men in all ages, and which, from the dawn of Grecian philosophy, has been especially operating with more or less increasing force on every successive generation, we are still brought face to face with those problems of a speculative character which have always been, and must always be, the most important branch of inquiry pertaining to man as a rational and sentient being. To us as truly as to the first Greek philosoper there comes an urgent demand that we should understand the meaning of this wonderful panorama by which we are surrounded; the meaning of these mysterious instincts in our nature perpetually driving us forward in the pursuit of knowledge, and at the same time producing in our consciousness a realization of that fundamental need of our nature which constitutes the basis of all philosophy: "I do not possess wisdom, I must look for it."

The higher the nature, the greater the demand; so that while we are enabled to reproduce in our imagination the grandeur of those efforts which, beginning with Thales, the Milesian, placed Grecian thought on its exalted eminence, we are also enabled, through our communion with the intellectual giants of Greece, to appreciate more thoroughly, perhaps, than in any other way *the necessity of understanding the present.* In this sense, the great minds of the past speak to us with an eloquence more powerful than the most brilliant orations of Œschines or Demosthenes. They indicate the necessity of that delicate and subtile analysis which enables us to enter into the consciousness of the age, and which, because it induces us to separate things apparent from things real, brings us into a more vivid realization of those formative influences by which our future, as well as our present, is determined. As we examine these various phases of human thought that have come down to us, it may be true that they indicate a series of more or less unsuccessful attempts to master the difficulties of those complex problems of human nature and human destiny with which the progress of civilization is so intimately associated and so inseparably connected. To some extent, we are in every intellectual problem reminded of Sisyphus. And yet discouraging as this view may be in some respects, it is equally encouraging in others. Admitting, as we must, that the mightiest intellects have been those most keenly alive to the magnitude and inexhaustible nature of the problem, they have nevertheless inspired us with their hopes, and encouraged us by their example. The history of philosophy is a history of these gradations of the human intellect—the approaching to and receding from the science of principles as its objective point; but it

is none the less a record of those marvelous processes of thought which would seem amply to justify the opinion of Hegel: "Philosophy is the science of the absolute in the form of dialectical development, or the science of the self-comprehending reason." As inheritors of an advanced civilization, and as actors in a wonderful drama which every new phase of thought renders more deeply significant and interesting, we are therefore compelled, in some measure at least, to enter into and discover the true significance of that restlessness and searching analysis which constitute the prevailing features of the present age. "It is not," as Mr. Greg has said in his admirable work, 'Enigmas of Life,' "by shirking difficulties that we can remove them or escape them; nor by evading the perplexing problems of life or speculation that we can hope to solve them; nor by saying, Hush, hush! to every over-subtile questioner that the question can be answered or the asker silenced. Men cannot go on forever living upon half-exploded shams; keeping obsolete laws with admittedly false preambles on their statute-books; professing creeds only half credited and quite incredible; standing and sleeping on suspected or recognized volcanoes; erecting both their dwellings and their temples on ice which the first dreaded rays of sunlight they know must melt away. We cannot always keep clouds and darkness round about us; and it is a miserable condition alike for men and nations to feel dependent upon being able permanently to enforce blindness and maintain silence; to live, as it were, intellectually on sufferance; to shiver under an uneasy semi-consciousness that all their delicate fabrics of thought and peace lie at the mercy of the first pertinacious questioner or rude logician." No matter how true it may

be, as before said, that in every thing pertaining to the phenomena of mind we land sooner or later in the region of the unknowable. It is equally true that the measure of our investigation must always be the measure of our knowledge. Under the limitation of human conditions, and in view of that perpetual blending of light and shadow which surrounds even our most ordinary perceptions, it is obvious that no mind can expect to explore the whole realm of truth. The most that any system of thought can consistently claim is to stimulate the mind and to quicken our intellectual activities. Here and there we catch glimpses of the truth ; but this is all that can reasonably be expected. It is all that the present work expects to accomplish. As Sir William Hamilton has well said in his treatment of the philosophy of the conditioned: "The grand result of human wisdom is thus only a consciousness that what we know is as nothing to what we know not."

"*Quantum est quod nescimus!*"

An articulate confession, in fact, by our natural reason, of the truth declared in revelation, that "*now* we see through a glass, darkly." Independently of this, however, man is a rational being; and as such, even admitting that all knowledge is but qualified ignorance, it still remains true that he must doubt to investigate, he must investigate to believe. Following out the idea conveyed by Plato's definition of man as "the *hunter* of truth," the *pursuit* is the main consideration, the *success* comparatively unimportant. The disposition to think for ourselves, even if it fails in the realization of its brightest expectations, is at least a sign of manliness, while it also indicates a commendable appreciation of intellectual freedom. In our moments of perplexity, we may again and again have occasion to repeat

the last words of the immortal Gœthe: "*More light!*" The demand is inseparable from the conditions of human thought and experience; and, as such, must come to us all. But let us not be deceived. It is a prayer that is always answered in a manner commensurate with the demands of the age and the measure of our receptive capacities. As Lowell has beautifully expressed it:

> "God sends his teachers into every age,
> To every clime, and every race of men,
> With revelations fitted to their growth
> And shape of mind; nor gives the realm of truth
> Unto the selfish rule of one sole race."

With these preliminary observations in view, let us therefore endeavor to gain at least a partial insight into the spirit of the age in which we live. The character of the future depends largely on our estimate of the present.

THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

ACCEPTING Professor Tyndall's "Prayer Test" as a fair illustration of the scientific mode of interpreting nature, and at the same time bearing in mind the unlimited supply of theological thunder which this able and conscientious scientist has called forth, we are certainly warranted in believing that the time has fairly arrived when it becomes us to enter somewhat philosophically into the cause of so significant a phenomenon—a phenomenon which, to say the least of it, is remarkable as indicating in a peculiar manner the antagonism between scientific and unscientific views of the same subject.

Philosophy and science on the one hand, and theology on the other: it is an old feud, but never was it more strongly marked than at present, when the scientific yeast is penetrating into the innermost recesses of our consciousness, and when the expansion of knowledge is gradually undermining the foundation of creeds which until now have been deemed infallible. But, says some extremely conservative individual, it is altogether wrong to agitate a question which can only tend to weaken the bases of our faith, diminish the importance of long-established usages and traditions, and ultimately even to render the existence of religion impossible.

Such may and doubtless will be the expression of many, but it is not a statement of the truth; nor does it penetrate beneath the surface in its estimate of those forces which in their concurrent action make up the spirit of the age. As rational beings, we possess certain faculties, which, besides demanding a constant process of intellectual exercise, also necessitate an incessant and diligent search in the cause of truth: a search, too, which, although it will at times be subversive of the existing order of things, is nevertheless incumbent on us as possessors of talents which God has given us to use, and not to bury in the earth.

In a certain sense, it may be true that the sentiment which confounds the march of intellect with the operations of the Devil is a pardonable one. In another, however, and that by far the most important sense, it is undeniably a hindrance to the general cause of truth. For instance, as in the fourth century, when the belief in the antipodes was considered unscriptural, although it may have been excusable in the pious Lactantius to oppose the growing idea, the opposition certainly did not facilitate the cause of progress.* Or, to select another instance, when Galileo asserted the revolution of the

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*In connection with the controversy on the subject of the antipodes, it is amusing, from our present stand point, to notice the peculiar views advanced by one Cosmas, who was evidently considered the champion on the orthodox side. According to this authority: "The world is a flat parallelogram. Its length, which should be measured from east to west, is the double of its breadth, which should be measured from north to south. In the center is the earth we inhabit, which is surrounded by the ocean, and this again is encircled by another earth, in which men lived before the deluge, and from which Noah was transported in the ark. To the north of the world is a high conical mountain, around which the sun and moon continually revolve. When the sun is hid behind the mountain, it is night; when it is on our side of the mountain, it is day."—*See* "*History of Rationalism in Europe*," by W. E. H. Lecky, M. A. Quotations being made by him from the Benedictine Latin translation of the original.

earth, although it was somewhat natural that the church should warmly defend the Ptolemaic system of the universe, it can hardly be denied that the cause of progress was seriously obstructed, and the interests of truth made subservient to the dominations of an ignorant and oppressive prejudice. Similarly must the value of all unscientific and circumscribed opinions be measured by us at the present day.

The world has moved; the fact of the antipodes has been established, and, although we are not liable to be put to death for entertaining opinions contrary to the dictum of authority, there still remains a very large residue of that unscientific spirit which Whewell so aptly describes as "the practice of referring things and events not to clear and distinct notions, not to general rules capable of direct verification, but to notions vague, distant, and vast, and which we cannot bring into contact with facts;" and which, it will be easily seen, is therefore necessarily opposed to everything like a scientific interpretation of man and nature." We have advanced, it is true; and the ratio of our advancement has been in exact proportion to the measure of our knowledge and the progress we have thereby made in, first of all, understanding nature, and then utilizing our discoveries. Should we desire to continue advancing, our tendencies must be in the same direction. Indeed, so truly is this the case, that we may well say, in the language of the late Prince Consort of England: "No human pursuits make any material progress until science is brought to bear upon them. We have seen, accordingly, many of them slumber for centuries; but from the moment that science has touched them with her magic wand, they have sprung

forward, and taken strides which amaze and almost awe the beholder. Look at the transformation which has gone on around us since the laws of gravitation, electricity, magnetism, and the expansive power of heat have become known to us. It has altered the whole state of existence, —one might say the whole face of the globe. We owe this to science, and to science alone; and she has other treasures in store for us, if we will but call her to our assistance."†

"Let there be light," says science; and, in obedience to the mandate, mind has attained a supremacy over matter which in earlier and unscientific ages was deemed impossible. Nor must it be supposed that in thus emphasizing the physical advantages of science, it is intended to limit the field of scientific application to the realm of physical forces. In this respect, there exists, unfortunately, a very general and very erroneous impression that science means merely the accumulation of facts relating to the world of matter; whereas the truth is that although this is certainly a very important branch of scientific pursuit, and may be even said to constitute its *sine qua non*, there still exists a higher and wider sense in which it applies to psychical as well as physical activities; and which, because it invests the term Nature with a fuller and more perfect meaning, necessitates a profounder estimate of man and the conditions by which he is surrounded. But, says some one, in the language of Froude, "If it is free to a man to choose what he will do or not do, there is no adequate science of him."‡

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†Extract from an address delivered at Birmingham by his Royal Highness Prince Albert.—See "*Culture Demanded by Modern Life*," page 444.

‡"*Short Studies on Great Subjects*," by JAS. ANTHONY FROUDE, Vol. I, page 11.

On the surface, this may seem a serious objection; an obstacle perhaps which to some minds may seem entirely to dispose of any claim to universality on the part of science. According to Phædrus, however:

> "*Non semper ea sunt quæ videntur, decipit*
> *Frons prima multos.*"

Appearances are almost always deceptive—there never was a greater truth—but they are especially so when applied to subjects that border on the abstruse and profound. Allowing that we cannot predicate an *exact* science of man, and admitting also that scientific previsions have necessarily various degrees of definiteness, it certainly does not follow that we are therefore compelled to abandon our position; nor is it because we cannot claim for the science of human nature a place beside astronomy as an exact science that we must therefore pronounce the impossibility of its being a science at all. Apply this argument to some of the physical sciences, meteorology, for instance, and see what the result would be. Surely no one would dream of calling meteorology an exact science, nor would they, nor could they, say because it is not exact, it is therefore no science. It gives evidences of *some prevision*, and therefore there is *some science*. And precisely similar is it when we attempt to apply the scientific spirit to the science of man.

"It is no disparagement, therefore, to the science of human nature that those of its general propositions which descend sufficiently into detail to serve as a foundation for predicting phenomena in the concrete are, for the most part, only approximately true. But in order to give a genuinely scientific character to the study, it is

indispensable that these approximate generalizations, which in themselves would amount only to the lowest kind of empirical laws, should be connected deductively with the laws of nature from which they result; should be resolved into the properties of the causes on which the phenomena depend. In other words, the science of human nature may be said to exist in proportion as those approximate truths which compose a practical knowledge of mankind can be exhibited as corollaries from the universal laws of human nature on which they rest; whereby the proper limits of those approximate truths would be shown, and we should be enabled to deduce others for any new state of circumstances, in anticipation of specific experience." § Nor is there anything chimerical in this definition of the highest and noblest aspect of science. As scientists, we are bound to commence our investigations on the basis of physical life. As philosophers, we are warranted in enlarging the horizon of scientific uses, and thus postulating the possibility of a science of human nature. Nor is the transition of thought, even in a remote sense, arbitrary or unnatural.

Situated, as we are in a world where everything is governed by law, and surrounded as we are by innumerable evidences that the discovery of law means the enlargement of our spheres of usefulness, the amelioration of sickness and suffering, the utilization of hidden resources, and the augmentation of our happiness, it certainly is but natural that the deepest and most earnest thinkers should feel themselves thoroughly imbued with the idea that there is and must be a science of man as truly as there is a science of botany, chemistry or geology.

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§ "*System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*," by JOHN STUART MILL.

Observe, too, in this connection, that, in the event of our so far circumscribing the sphere of science as to preclude its application to human nature, we are compelled either to seek for our justification in the ridiculous theory that all human affairs are determined by chance, or by special and miraculous interpositions of the Supreme Being, and therefore beyond the limits of scientific investigation; or, otherwise, to resort to that still greater absurdity which induces the supposition that although science is relevant when applied to the forms and forces of matter, it is irrelevant and useless when applied to man: a position which, in addition to the dilemma in which it inevitably places us, can only meet with the same fate, from the gradual but certain encroachments of a strictly scientific spirit, that the *ipse dixit* of Canute did from the waters of Southampton. True, it may be many years before we are enabled fairly to realize the exact nature of those laws which govern the mental and moral constitution of man; the nature of social tendencies and aggregations, and how from their primitive and chaotic condition they have attained that state in which we now find them.

From the magnitude and importance of the subjects involved, this must of necessity be the case. Following as a consequence derived from that law of hereditary transmission which renders every age in some sense the resemblance of its predecessors, we are still influenced by certain conditions of a retrospective rather than a progressive character; and which, therefore, impede to some extent the dissemination and application of scientific principles. As Goethe says, "It is much easier to perceive error than to find truth;" a maxim especially applicable to the mass of ignorance and bigotry which the scientific spirit has to contend against.

Here, however, let us be sure we do not deceive ourselves. In a certain sense, and that a limited one, it is perfectly true that we are hampered by the relics of an unscientific age; but in another sense, and that a general one, it is equally true that

> "Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
> Sung beside her in her youth."

So it has always been; so it must always be. So it was when the world laid aside the beautiful dreams of its childhood, for the truer, though somewhat more prosaic, sentiments of a maturer age. So it is now, while we are passing from the simpler to the more complex and more rational views consequent on the scientific spirit of the age. Tenderly as we may regard, and fondly as we may dwell upon, those earlier lispings of the human race, of which we have so many evidences in the Veda, the Zend-avesta, and the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, we are nevertheless compelled to realize both the usefulness and importance of that change which, although it dissipates many beautiful illusions, gives us at the same time what is of infinitely more value, viz., a clearer and fuller appreciation of the truth. Standing, as we do, upon the platform of modern thought, it is, indeed, as if in ages long past there had been many beautiful ideas suggested, many notes of exquisite and delicious harmony passing over the lyre of the human soul; whereas, in these days, we have a symphony of thought not so full of pathos, perhaps, but yet more thoroughly blended into a harmonious tune. Considered in the light of our superior enlightenment, it is no longer possible for us to regard the cloud upon the mountain-top as a conclave of divinities; but, under the same enlightenment, we are

enabled to transmute the mythological thought into a scientific estimate; our superior knowledge thus disclosing to us an infinite concatenation of causes and effects, whereby we are led from one point to another along the entire network of nature; and which, in point of intrinsic value, is really superior to the discordant elements of an earlier age, proportionately as truth is better than error—a progressive condition, in fact, in which we pass from the irregular and disorganized forces of an unscientific age, to the systematic application of principles discovered through patient and diligent research. Syllogistical theses have had their day: it is now the season of scientific experiment. To some extent, it is true that we live in the same world as that inhabited by our ancestors, and yet so changed are our conditions that it is equally true that the present measure of scientific attainments, if predicted a thousand years ago, would have sounded much more like a chapter from the Arabian Nights' Entertainments than the prophetic promise of a reality.

But, says some one, the question still remains an open one, whether scientific investigation, in spite of all its advantages, does not tend to the disintegration of all religious ideas, thus inculcating, in place of the lofty idealism of Christianity, a merely unsatisfactory doctrine of Materialism. In a measure this objection has already been anticipated, but, in order to answer it more fully, it may not be amiss to examine the foundations on which the possibility of such an objection is founded. To accomplish this, it seems to us, the first and most important consideration consists in ascertaining clearly what we mean by the terms Nature and Religion. In this connection, unless we can so far imitate the

Socratic form of argument as to understand, in something like a definite form, the meaning of the subjects we are discussing, it would be possible to go on forever without in the least effecting our purpose. Indeed, it is the most obvious thing in the world that as long as these terms signify to the scientific mind one thing, and to the unscientific mind quite another, we may go on *ad infinitum* exchanging our intellectual artillery, and in the end find that it has all been to no purpose.

As an example of this, we have only to look at the extent and fruitlessness of theological discussions; thereby noticing that their irreconcilable differences proceed quite as much from mutual misunderstanding as they do from any inherent antagonism in the opinions discussed. Each polemic confines himself to his own partisans, and makes no impression on his adversary. In fact, so extremely surperficial and fruitless have these discussions been, that even if we consider Martial's sarcasm, "*Iras et verba locant*," too severe in its application to these disputants, it still remains true that, in their desire to quarrel more about the shadow than the substance, the result has been the production of those manifold *isms* which so sorely perplex the minds of ordinary observers; and which, although in their petty doctrinal disputes they have invested the fair and beautiful form of Christianity with a theological garment of as many colors as Joseph's coat, in their last analysis resolve their differences into an unnecessary war of words, rather than into an actual contest of principles.

> "Men's tongues are voluble,
> And endless are the modes of speech, and far
> Extends from side to side the field of words."‖

‖ BRYANT'S "*Homer-Iliad*," Book XX.

Far be it from us, however, to fall into a similar error; while, the more fully to illustrate this branch of the argument, we will cite a good example furnished by Professor Blackie in his masterly essay on Socrates. It reads thus: "Suppose I get into an argument with any person as to whether A or B, or any person holding certain opinions, manifesting certain feelings, and acting in a certain way, is a Christian. I say he is, my contradictor says he is not; how then shall we settle the difference? Following the example of Socrates, the best procedure certainly will be to ask him to define what he means by a Christian. Suppose then he answers, *a Christian is a religious person who believes in the Nicene creed.* I immediately reply, the Nicene creed was not sent forth till the year 325 after Christ; what then do you make of the thousands and hundreds of thousands of Christians who lived before that? To this objection the answer of course will be that the Nicene creed, though not set forth in express articles, did virtually exist as a part of the living faith of all true Christians. Then, if I doubt this, I say, was Origen a Christian, was Justin Martyr a Christian? Are you sure these two fathers believed every article of that creed? My opponent now, in all likelihood, not being profoundly versed in patristic lore, is staggered; and I proceed, we shall suppose, to cite some passages from some of the ante-Nicene Fathers which imply dissent from some of the articles of the orthodox symbol. He is then reduced to the dilemma of either denying that this Father was a Christian, or (as that will scarcely be allowable) widening his original definition so as to include a variety of cases which, by the narrowness of the terms, were excluded. I then go on to test the comprehensiveness of the new definition in the same way;

and if I find that it contains any elements which belong to the species and not to the genus, any peculiarities, say, of modern Calvinisn, or of mediæval Popery, that do not belong to the general term 'Christianity,' I push him into a corner in the same way as before, till I bring out from his own admissions a pure and broad definition of the designation of Christian, as opposed to Heathen, Jew, or any other sort of religious professor." ¶

Such was the Socratic method of arriving at a sound basis on which to reason; and we can easily see from the example that, in proportion as the definition is widened, so far does there exist a possibility of ignoring all minor differences, and giving to the term involved a breadth of meaning which it did not at first seem to possess.

Correspondingly, it is only by an enlargement and expansion of the terms Nature and Religion that the scientific mind can hope to be fairly understood. For instance, if, from a theological standpoint, we mean by the term Nature merely the result of a creative fiat, as represented in the Mosaic cosmogony; and, from a scientific point of view, mean by the same term a whole series of geological changes so vast that even the most stupendous intellectual efforts fail to estimate their immensity; or, again, when speaking of Religion, if we mean, on the one hand, a mere assent to certain creeds and forms of ceremonial worship, and, on the other hand, mean, by the same term, that deeply seated sentiment of reciprocity between the creature and the Creator which, although it embraces all creeds and formulas, assigns to them the position of minor auxiliaries, or, at best, mere

¶ "*Four Phases of Morals*," by JOHN STUART BLACKIE, Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh.

adumbrations of the truth—it is clear, in the face of these facts, that there can be no common ground on which we may effect a reconciliation, or even an understanding. Not so, however, when once we have stripped the matter of all extraneous issues, and thus find that there is a common ground on which Science and Religion may meet, not as antagonists, but as twin sisters, both having equal claims to a celestial birth, and both, in their different functions, tending to elevate man into a condition of wisdom and happiness.

In its highest and profoundest sense, science as truly as religion participates in that beautiful sentiment:

> "Be worthy of death; and so learn to live
> That every incarnation of thy soul
> In other realms, and worlds, and firmaments,
> Shall be more pure and high."

In the consciousness of a strictly scientific man there is nothing which precludes the possibility of his being a religious man also. Of course, the quality of his religion must necessarily differ very materially from that of the *Οἱ πολλοι;* but this does not deny the possible coexistence of the religious with the scientific sentiment No; the fact is (in spite of the many confused ideas on the subject), the principles which actuate a pure religion, and the principles which actuate a noble and useful science, although not identical, are certainly not antagonistic or even inimical. In these days there is much said about the atheistical and disastrous tendencies of modern science; but to those who think calmly and profoundly on the subject, the alarm is a false one; or at least one in which the truth is so dreadfully distorted that we cannot help pitying the strait to which theologians are reduced when they are so far com-

pelled to sacrifice principle to fury. Nor can it be denied that it becomes impossible, in this connection, for any one to look candidly and carefully at those dogmas which theologians are pleased to prescribe as the measure and fullness of truth, without being somewhat reminded of the fabled lamps in the tomb of Terentia, which burned for many years under ground, but which as soon as they were exposed to the air, and saw a brighter light, immediately went out. We have passed from the twilight of superstition into the sunshine of reason; and the result is visible in the quality as well as in the quantity of the world's knowledge. In other words, we have become dissatisfied with the settled opinions of our ancestors, and the consequence is that, even though we are in duty bound to give them decent burial, we are at the same time compelled to yield our zealous admiration to that scientific spirit which has already done so much toward bringing the forces of physical nature under human control, and which also promises, by a process of gradual enlightenment, to illuminate many hitherto dark corners in the regions of philosophy and psychology.*

Omnium rerum vicissitudo est.

In the destruction, however, of unimportant creeds

* "In no age so conspicuously as in our own has there been a crowding in of new scientific conceptions of all kinds to exercise a perturbing influence on speculative philosophy. They have come in almost too fast for philosophy's power of conception. She has visibly reeled amid their shocks, and has not yet recovered her equilibrium. Within those years alone which we are engaged in surveying, there have been developments of native British science, not to speak of influxes of scientific ideas, hints, and probabilities from without, in the midst of which British philosophy has looked about her scared and bewildered, and has felt that some of her oldest statements about herself, and some of the most important terms in her vocabulary, require re-explication."—*Recent British Philosophy*, by Prof. MASON, of the University of Edinburgh.

and dogmas, and the habit of restlessness which the scientific spirit necessitates, the essence of religion still remains; nor is it the desire of science to diminish its importance. Or, to emphasize as distinctly as possible the attitude of scientific thought in this respect, it is perfectly clear, to the most reflective minds, that the *ουσία* of religion may be and is indestructible; while the media through which it expresses itself, and the forms constituting its method of expression, are of necessity governed and directed by the intellectual type of the age, and the prevailing tendency of thought and sentiment. True, the measure of human prejudice is so powerful that it has taken the world ages to realize the truth of this statement; but it is no less valid on that account. In the history of human development, if there is one feature more strongly marked than another, it is that the special characteristic of every age consists in its power of assimilation; and thus of incorporating such thoughts and sentiments as are, by an apparently orderly process, adapted to the measure of growth and the capacity of digestion.

To appreciate, therefore, the peculiarly advanced condition of modern thought, it will be well for us to bear in mind two very important considerations which, though superficially remote, are nevertheless very closely related: *i. e.*, the numerous advantages derived from the application of scientific principles, and the many gradations and fluctuations of thought which have all in some way contributed toward the formation of our present intellectual *status*.

In our present transitional process, and in view of the increasing supremacy of scientific thought which accompanies it, there is no suspension or violation of this principle.

"The eternal Pan,
Bideth never in one shape,
But forever doth escape
Into new forms,"

is true not only as a poetic divination, it is also true when applied as a principle to those processes and transformations upon which our intellectual as well as our physical life depends. From the nature of its methods, and its persistency and breadth of investigation, the scientific spirit must necessarily encroach upon the domain of theology and philosophy; but what of that, since the consecration of its energies to the discovery of truth is an unquestionable guaranty as to its purposes. Indeed, with respect to the theological aspect of the subject, it were better for the human race had the Church at an earlier day learned to appreciate and utilize the glorious mission of Science.

As has been truly remarked: "No one can study the progress of modern civilization without being continually reminded of the great, it might be said the mortal, mistake committed by the Roman Church. Had it put itself forth as the promoter and protector of science, it would at this day have exerted an unquestioned dominion over all Europe. Instead of being the stumbling-block, it would have been the animating agent of human advancement. It shut the Bible only to have it opened forcibly by the Reformation; it shut the book of Nature, but has found it impossible to keep it closed. How different the result had it abandoned the obsolete absurdities of patristicism, and become imbued with the spirit of true philosophy—had it lifted itself to a comprehension of the awful magnificence of the heavens above and the glories of the earth beneath—had

it appreciated the immeasurable vastness of the universe, its infinite multitude of worlds, its inconceivable past duration! How different if, in place of ever looking backward, it had only looked forward—bowing itself down in a world of life and light, instead of worshiping, in the charnel-house of antiquity, the skeletons of twenty centuries! How different had it hailed with transport the discoveries and inventions of human genius, instead of scowling upon them with a malignant and baleful eye! How different had it canonized the great men who have been the interpreters of Nature, instead of anathematizing them as atheists!"† Of the correctness of these views there can be no doubt. Were science better understood there would be fewer false alarmists. Were she better appreciated, there can be no reasonable doubt that the course of progress would be much more uniform and rapid.

The habit of thought which has already done so much toward giving us an almost absolute supremacy over the forces of Nature must of necessity prove beneficial when applied to those complex conditions growing out of human life. In the spirit of men, let us, therefore, cultivate those scientific influences which have already done so much to render man the crown and glory of the universe; and which, by a judicious application of its principles, must necessarily tend more and more to lift us out of the shadowy region of hypothesis, into the clearer atmosphere of theory grounded on fact; and when, also, by an enlarged application of the same principles, we shall realize the possibility of a universal

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† "Deficiencies of Clerical Education," by JOHN W. DRAPER, M.D., L.L.D., of the University of New York. See "*Culture Demanded by Modern Life*," page 430.

science, embracing in its widest and profoundest sense the science of life. Nor is this expectation by any means an unreasonable one.

On the contrary, just so surely as our habits of scientific thought compel us to enlarge our views of religion, and to purify and enlighten our theological ideas, just so surely will we witness the inauguration of that grand and comprehensive philosophy which Bacon describes as "the union and co-operation of all in building up and perfecting that House of Solomon, the end of which is the knowledge of causes and of the secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire to the effecting of all things possible." As we pass from the phenomena of life to those of mental and moral emotions, it is indeed true that we enter a region of almost impenetrable mystery. As we enter this mysterious region, it is well to remember the delicate and sensitive nature of the subject. It is also well, however, to remember that, even at the risk of doing some temporary violence, the scientific spirit is bound to enter.

In many instances, some of our fondest sentiments will be trampled under foot; but this is inevitable in any process which professes to eliminate the false from the true. It is due to the searching analysis of a scientific age. Destructive in some respects, science is, however, reconstructive in others. Under one aspect, we see only the demolition and decay of many venerable creeds and dogmas. Under another, and that by far the most important, we cannot resist the conviction that there is something grand and encouraging in that condition of thought which results from a careful study and proper appreciation of the scientific spirit. The method of

scientific inquiry may be severe; but it is, for this reason, all the more healthy and beneficial. Like a skillful surgeon, it inflicts pain merely to cure disease.

The advancement of science means necessarily a clearer insight into the laws of nature; a better acquaintance with nature means necessarily the promotion of our welfare and happiness, and the ultimate dominion of mind over matter. It is, therefore, a fallacious mode of reasoning which would seek to restrict the sphere of scientific influences, or, in any sense, impede the progress of scientific ideas. To understand ourselves we must understand the conditions which surround us. It is needless to say that this is impossible without the aid of science.

SKEPTICISM: ITS FUNCTION AND IMPORTANCE.

Phædrus.—Do you see that tallest plane-tree in the distance?

Socrates.—Yes.

Phædrus.—There are shade and gentle breezes, and grass on which we may either sit or lie down.

Socrates.—Move on.

Phædrus.—I should like to know, Socrates, whether the place is not somewhere here at which Boreas is said to have carried off Orithyia from the banks of the Ilissus.

Socrates.—That is the tradition.

Phædrus.—And is this the exact spot? The little stream is delightfully clear and bright; I can fancy that there might be maidens playing near.

Socrates.—I believe that the spot is not exactly here, but about a quarter of a mile lower down, where you cross to the Temple of Agra, and I think that there is some sort of Altar of Boreas at the place.

Phædrus.—I don't recollect; but I wish that you would tell me whether you believe this tale.

Socrates.—The wise are doubtful, and if, like them, I also doubted, there would be nothing very strange in that.*

Such is the dialogue, as Plato represents it, between the two friends, as they enter into a shady retreat for the purpose of discussing the merits of Lysias' speech.

The conditions are truly inviting: the country is beautiful, the air exquisitely pure and full of sweet scents, as they pass on to their goal, and to the consideration of their subject. For us, however, it is only the passing remark that "the wise are doubtful, etc," which at present concerns us; and which we have selected because it in a measure forms an introduction to the subject embraced in the present chapter: viz., that spirit of doubt, and disposition to investigate, which, having become synonymous with the spirit of the age, are at once the terror of extreme conservatism, and the hope and promise of liberal and progressive thought. Tradition says the latter is well; but rational and clear-sighted investigation is better. And thus we pass into a habit of thought in many respects hostile to that of the past, and which, when viewed from an ecclesiastical standpoint, is thus described: "Doubt is everywhere. Skeptical suggestions are wrapped in narrative; they bristle in short, shallow, self-asserting essays, in which men who really show their ignorance, think they show their depth; they color our physical philosophy; they mingle themselves with our commonplace theology itself."† Thus, according to orthodoxy, in addition to

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* "*Dialogues of Plato,*" Phædrus. Translated by B. JOWETT, M.A., Master of Baliol College, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford.

† "*Faith and Free Thought,*" Preface. By SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, D.D., Bishop of Winchester.

the frightful ignorance which modern skepticism rests upon for its support, its mere existence constitutes a sort of *descensus averni* from which we ought to shrink with all the instinct of self-preservation, accompanied by a due preponderance of pious horror and intensified repugnance. According to modern thought, on the other hand, the idea is rapidly gaining ground that as the discovery of all truth is necessarily progressive, so there is not, and cannot be, any such thing as a divorce, or even alienation, between skepticism and progress.

> **"Who never doubted never half believed,**
> **Where doubt there truth is—'tis her shadow."**

Indeed, so rapidly is this feeling spreading, and so powerfully is it disseminating its influences, that we scarcely meet with a person of any intellectual caliber who has not in some way become touched by the skeptical tendency; and who, if he does not evince a spirit of bold and candid skepticism, at least so far qualifies his opinions that they amount virtually to the same thing. "We know accurately only when we know little; with knowledge doubt increases." So said Gœthe; and so says the nineteenth century, at least so far as a powerful and daily increasing number of its representatives is concerned. ‡

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‡ Just here, however, it may perhaps be as well to observe that, although modern skepticism partakes necessarily to some extent of the character of Pyrrhonism, it at the same time differs from it in one important particular: viz., that whereas the skepticism of Pyrrho leads to the conclusion that *nothing truly is*, the modern skeptic merely doubts and questions the existing order of things the *more fully to arrive at the fundamental bases of truth.*

> "He that says nothing can be known, o'erthrows
> His own opinion, for he nothing knows,
> So knows not that." LUCRETIUS.

Passing over from the earlier and more rudimentary state of our intellectual development, we have entered on that condition when the mind refuses to rest satisfied with the dicta of a hundred years ago, and when, even admitting that we have lost in some directions through the change from credulity to incredulity, it surely will not be denied that we have gained considerably in the cultivation of a spirit of earnest and fearless criticism. The change has been gradual, but it is for this reason no less potent or real. However much, therefore, the attempt may be made in some quarters to denounce and suppress the spirit of inquiry which is abroad at the present day, it is of no avail. When once the human mind has been as thoroughly shaken as it has been within the last century, there is no way out of the difficulty but by meeting the subject in a manly, straightforward manner.

True it may be that we may often wish we had, like Theseus, an Ariadne to help us through the labyrinth; but even in these moments of temporary depression, there is no reason why we should give up the problem in despair, or even sigh for a return to the simpler faith of the world's childhood. Born as we are under a sharper and more invigorating atmosphere than that of preceding ages, it is well for us to remember that even if we are deprived of much of the calm and sweet serenity consequent on an abiding faith and childlike acceptance of traditional beliefs, we are, from the activity of the forces around us, more likely to develop into a full and perfect manhood. And, then again, there is certainly some encouragement in the fact that an intelligent skepticism is decidedly better than an ignorant superstition. In the latter, we grow into a sort of abnormal condition, in which, through the exaggerated cultivation of our sen-

timents at the expense of reason, we venerate and listen to superstition. In the language of Southey:

> "A nurse's tale
> Which children, open-eyed and mouthed, devour;
> And thus, as garrulous ignorance relates,
> We learn it and believe."

In the former, even if we do no more, we rise at least to a better conception of those constituent elements without which progress is impossible, and through which we are enabled, first of all, to discover the extent and quality of our false knowledge, and then to remove the evil according as reason and an increased enlightenment shall dictate the remedy. So far, then, from our fears being excited by this daily increasing spirit of skepticism, it is the duty of every rational mind to encourage a process which, however painful it may be to some, is ultimately destined to be a benefit to all.

In fact, what an eminent historian has said respecting Greece in the time of Socrates, and the effect of the Socratic principles upon the public intellect, § may be strictly applied to our modern civilization, and to the consequences which this growing spirit of skepticism has already produced. The feeling of hesitancy and uncertainty lies at the very basis of all philosophy; the principles of philosophy at the root of all real and

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§ The Socratic dialectics, clearing away from the mind its fancied knowledge, and laying bare the real ignorance, produced an immediate effect like the touch of the torpedo. The newly created consciousness of ignorance was alike unexpected, painful, and humiliating—a season of doubt and discomfort, yet combined with an internal working and yearning after truth never before experienced. Such intellectual quickening, which could never commence until the mind had been disabused of its original illusion of false knowledge, was considered by Socrates not merely as the index and precursor, but as the indispensable condition of future progress.—"*Grote's History of Greece*," Vol. VII, pages 614, 615.

permanent advancement. Without these elements our intellectual life would be a blank; there could be no change, no progress, no civilization. Who, therefore, will forbid a wise and honest skepticism, seeing that there are necessarily gradations and fluctuations in all our ideas of truth? Who will attempt the suppression of an earnest and manly doubt, when the best and wisest of us but too well know that he who believes his ideas on secular or religious matters to be so fully the truth that there is nothing beyond is invariably made up of arrogance and ignorance, and in every sense unfit to be a representative of the intellectual tendency of the present age? No; the movement has commenced; and though there may be some who willfully shut their eyes to the increasing light, preferring to be

> "The slaves of custom and established mode,
> With pack-horse constancy to keep the road,
> Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
> True to the jingling of their leader's bells,"

there are yet others for whom truth is indeed a form divine:

> "Her right hand holds a sun with burning rays,
> Her left a curious bunch of golden keys."

And thus it comes to pass that the interrogation of custom at all points is an inevitable stage in the growth of society, and the strongest evidence we can have of man's progressive nature; the necessary condition, in fact, of those alternate states of transition and purgation through which we are made first of all to discover, and then to repudiate, all phases of error and falsehood.

Remove the possibility of skepticism, and we destroy the very basis of progress; and in place of a world

wherein all life is synonymous with process and change, we reduce everything to a deplorable state of inaction and torpor, inevitably ending in decomposition and decay. But, says some one, the world moves well enough, and therefore we can only regard the inroads of skepticism as positively dangerous. Well; there are doubtless many who think in this manner, and who are unquestionably perfectly sincere and honest in their convictions. Let us, however, see how their opinions look in the light of reason and common-sense; remembering also that such a position necessitates two things which no philosophical mind can for a moment entertain: first, the altogether erroneous idea that truth derives its existence from passive and not active conditions; and second, that spirit of narrow-mindedness and exclusiveness which would denounce as false and dangerous every opinion that does not coincide with *our* views: conditions which, it seems to us, are in themselves sufficient to determine the advantage or disadvantage of skepticism. For the purpose, however, of illustrating this branch of our subject more clearly, it may be well for us to look candidly at the condition of those countries where the spirit of skepticism has invariably been stifled, and then compare the result with those wherein the mind has been allowed free action. To do this the more effectually, we will quote from Buckle's "History of Civilization" in England, a few remarks which are strongly pertinent to the subject: "In Spain," says he, "the Church, aided by the Inquisition, has always been strong enough to punish skeptical writers, and prevent, not, indeed, the existence, but the promulgation, of skeptical opinions. By this means, the spirit of doubt being quenched, knowledge has for several centuries remained

almost stationary; and civilization, which is the fruit of knowledge, has also been stationary. But in England and France, which, as we shall presently see, are the countries where skepticism first openly appeared, and where it has been most diffused, the results are altogether different; and the love of inquiry being encouraged, there has arisen that constantly progressive knowledge to which these two great nations owe their prosperity."

And this is true; for the more thoroughly we examine into the nature of skepticism, the more clearly we shall see that it is the necessary accompaniment, and, to a very great extent, the *cause*, of every progressive movement in our moral and intellectual life. The prejudice which attaches to the term, and which is especially strong in the least cultivated minds, is, after all, a matter of no importance. It is by its consequences that it must be judged. Anything short of this is not only a fallacious mode of reasoning, it is also the quintessence of ignorance and prejudice.

And then, again, as an additional means of answering our anti-skeptical friend, and especially so supposing him to be a conscientious religionist, it is well to bear in mind that the skeptical tendencies of the present day are to a very great extent the legitimate results of Protestantism; Protestantism, it may be, more directly related to the learned and polished Erasmus than to the enthusiastic and inspiring Luther; but still the natural consequence of that tone of thought and spirit of freedom which, beginning with a protest against the abuse of the sale of indulgences, has gradually been gaining in strength, and extending its sphere of action. Of course, if we hold, with the Romish Church, that the Reformation was an evil, and that the impetus it gave to

the human mind was altogether in the wrong direction, then we become consistent in our opposition to anything and everything which indicates or encourages a freer and fuller development of our intellectual capacities. Not so, however, as Protestants. *The right to protest once necessitates the right to protest again and again;* and so on, as frequently as occasion may demand, and new ideas require new forms of expression.‖

To accomplish this is the function of skepticism. In one sense, it may be defined as a general and concurrent action among a certain class of minds who, for the time being, rise above the prejudices of their age; in another, it is an open and avowed proclamation in favor of the supremacy of reason, and the reasonableness of reasoning. Certainly in this character it is not, as some would have us believe, a monster of unpropitious birth; or, as more frequently represented, a destructive fiend whose very presence "strikes an awe and terror to my aching sight."

In its central conception, it is the elevation of our noblest faculty into a field of legitimate exercise and development. In its last analysis, it is a sublime realization of Sir William Hamilton's sentiment: "On earth there is nothing great but man; in man there is nothing great but mind." But it may still be urged that, even if we admit the fact, and acknowledge skepticism to

‖ "The Protestant Reformers, in transferring their allegiance from the Church to the word of God, practically asserted a right of private judgment. Their proceeding was founded on a subjective, personal conviction. Deny to the individual this ultimate prerogative of deciding where authority in matters of religion is rightfully placed, and then what the acknowledged rule of faith means, and their whole movement becomes indefensible, irrational. Hence, intellectual liberty, freedom of thought and inquiry, was a conseqence of the Reformation that could not fail to be eventually realized."—*History of the Reformation*, by GEO. P. FISHER, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale College.

be the inevitable accompaniment of civilization and cause of progress, there still remains another point at issue: viz., that as it is no easier to subdue the baser parts of our nature in the nineteenth century than it was in the first or second, our boasted accumulation of wisdom, and increased intellectual activity, are of no *practical* benefit. In fact, that even while we pursue knowledge as the *summum bonum* of human life, there are still moments when we are compelled to feel that, in the earlier ages of the world, and especially with reference to the primal glory of Christianity, there existed an all-pervading atmosphere of trust in and childlike reliance on a superior Power, the loss of which more than counterbalances our improvement in other directions. Certainly the assertion is a natural one, and at the same time possesses a considerable element of truth. Indeed, it may unhesitatingly be said that it is a subject which every thoughtful mind is compelled more or less to recognize. In our moments of deepest and most earnest reflection, it causes us to pause, to weigh more carefully the phases of thought coming up for our consideration, to enter more fully into the spirit of the age, and as nearly as possible to determine where we are drifting. In other words, it is even possible in our profoundest moments to enter so far within the kernel of our spiritual consciousness as to realize the exquisite beauty of that faith which could produce a St. Francis, and which in its most sublimated form, enables every devotional spirit to catch its highest and brightest glimpses of the Infinite.

> **"Like earth, awake, and warm, and bright**
> **With joy the spirit moves and burns;**
> **So up to thee, O Fount of Light,**
> **Our light returns."**

Certainly it is a beautiful sentiment, and one which elevates the drooping spirit into an atmosphere wherein the conditions are exquisitely pure and invigorating.

> "Night is the time to pray:
> Our Saviour oft withdrew
> To desert mountains far away;
> So will his followers do;
> Steal from the throng to haunts untrod,
> And commune there alone with God."

Or, again, to pass from Montgomery to Bailey's Festus:

> "Any heart turn'd Godward feels more joy
> In one short hour of prayer than e'er was rais'd
> By all the feasts on earth since their foundation."

Here, however, the thoughtful man comes necessarily to a pause; and, in so doing, discovers, not only that human nature is not all sentiment, but also that, as in the case of St. Francis, the reaction from the sensualism of Pompeii produced an extreme measure of spirituality which we can only consider an abnormal condition; so in the last analysis of this devotional spirit we are compelled to assign to it a static and not a dynamic condition.

Says Mr. Froude: "Submissiveness, humility, obedience, produce, if uncorrected, in politics, a nation of slaves whose baseness becomes an incentive to tyranny; in religion, they produce the consecration of falsehood, poperies, immaculate conceptions, winking images, and the confessional. The spirit of inquiry, if left to itself, becomes in like manner a disease of uncertainty, and terminates in universal skepticism. It seems as if, in a healthy order of things, to the willingness to believe there should be chained as its inseparable companion a

jealousy of deception; and there is no lesson more important for serious persons to impress upon themselves than that each of these temperaments must learn to tolerate the other; faith accepting from reason the sanction of its service, and reason receiving in return the warm pulsations of life. The two principles exist together in the highest natures; and the man who, in the best sense of the word, is devout is also the most cautious to whom or to what he pays his devotion." ¶ And so it really is; toleration being an indispensable ingredient in every form of honest and philosophical doubt.

Nor is skepticism an evil, as is popularly supposed, when applied to the fundamental principles of Christianity. According to its views in this respect, religion forms no exception to the general law of progress; for although it seems inevitable that the religious ideas of one age should become in a certain sense the poetry of the next—flickering, as it were, in an expiring beauty on the horizon of the past—yet with reference to the cardinal principles of Christianity it recognizes them as possessing a power and beauty more and more capable of realization as the human mind passes into new phases, and thus approaches nearer to a spiritualized conception, and an enlarged application of its beneficent influences, its sublime teachings, its comprehensive and ennobling views of human progress. In fact, it may in all truth be said that this spirit of toleration which a truly philosophical skepticism necessitates runs in a strictly parallel line with that world of tolerance transfigured

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¶ "*Short Studies on Great Subjects*," by JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A. See "Essay and Criticism on the Gospel History."

into human love which lies at the very basis of Christianity. And here we rest the grounds of relationship between skepticism and the devotional side of our nature. As has been said: "The moral element of Christianity is as the sun in heaven, and dogmatic systems are as the clouds that intercept and temper the exceeding brightness of its ray. The insect, whose existence is but for a moment, might well imagine that these were indeed eternal, that their majestic columns could never fail, and that their luminous folds were the very source and center of light. And yet they shift and vary with each changing breeze; they blend and separate; they assume new forms and exhibit new dimensions; as the sun that is above them waxes more glorious in its power, they are permeated and at last absorbed by its increasing splendor; they recede, and wither, and disappear, and the eye ranges far beyond the sphere they had occupied into the infinity of glory that is above them."* In the process of transition which skepticism necessitates, we certainly will (as has been already said) have cause again and again to exclaim, in the language of Mrs. Hemans:

> "A thousand thoughts of all things dear
> Like shadows o'er me sleep,
> I leave my sunny childhood here—
> Oh, therefore let me weep!"

Yet such are the conditions which the law of progress renders inevitable.

All through the entire range of human history this has been the case; this gradual remodeling of sentiment

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* "*History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*," by W. E. H. Lecky, M.A.

through the analytical action of reason. As it has been, so it is, and will continue to be. Like Thales, we may at times fall into a pit while gazing at the stars; and like him, too, we may experience the mortification of being mocked by ignorant and garrulous old women. But even should this be the case, it matters not. The skepticism which can be daunted by trifles such as these, if fairly tested, will be found to amount to nothing more than a species of shallow egotism, differing for the sake of being different, rather than that conscientious and fearless love of truth without which there can be no such thing as philosophical doubt, no form of skepticism that is not a miserable sham—no better than the error or imposture which it seeks to supplant. Not so, however, the spirit of honest doubt and earnest inquiry which we conceive as the legitimate form of skepticism, and which, from the keenness of its intellectual vision, but too well knows that the maximum of human power consists in its ability to scrutinize carefully each fragment of evidence, to study closely, to generalize slowly and thoughtfully, to think reverently and philosophically; and, in so doing, to realize gradually the truth of Tacitus' remark that "Truth is brought to light by time and reflection, while falsehood gathers strength from precipitation and bustle." In one sense, therefore, although the functions of skepticism are to some extent those of a destructive agent, it is equally true that, its existence being derived from the progressive tendency of man's nature, it is the legitimate product of our advanced civilization, and not the result of an unnatural and diseased condition, as is sometimes represented. "If to philosophize be right, we must philosophize to realize the right; if to philosophize be wrong, we must philosophize to manifest the

wrong; on any alternative, therefore, philosophize we must." So said Aristotle of philosophy; and the mode of reasoning is equally applicable to skepticism. In the one case, as in the other, the principles are determined by that inherent tendency in the human mind which impels us ever in the pursuit of knowledge, and which in rendering philosophy a necessity gives also a similar position to that skeptical tendency or attitude of doubt without which philosophy would be impossible.

Or, again, as Lessing has beautifully expressed it: "Did the Almighty, holding, in his right hand, Truth, and, in his left, Search after Truth, deign to proffer me the one I might prefer, in all humility, but without hesitation, I should request Search after Truth." In the world of mind, as in in the world of matter, there can be no life where there are no energizing and active influences at work. We exist as men only as we think as men. In this connection, surely no one will deny that the power to think implies the right to doubt; in fact, that besides their being in the strictest sense correlated, the existence of the one is inconceivable without the existence of the other. In other words, the normal state of development being that of process and change, skepticism is to civilization what the forces of action and reaction are to the material world. In either case, the object is the preservation of an equilibrium, the perpetuity of certain principles upon which all life, physical and psychical, depends, and, finally, the preclusion of that stagnant condition from which the mind instinctively recoils. Or, again, to reduce the whole subject to a simile which is by no means inapplicable: Life to Endymion was no better than death. Without skepticism, and the spirit of intellectual activity which it

engenders, society would be no better than the youthful Endymion lost in a perpetual sleep. Or, in the last place, to say with Hamlet:

> "What is a man,
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
> Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and god-like reason
> To fust in us unus'd."

It is true that, in following this principle to its logical consequences, we will in many instances find ourselves reduced to a condition of intellectual nakedness; but even this is better than the most superb and costly dress of error. Learn what is true in order to do what is right; this is the aim and purpose of the wise man. It is the last analysis of reason, and the dictate also of common-sense. It is the result of incessant thought and severe intellectual discipline. It is, in short, according to Gœthe, "the active skepticism whose whole aim is to conquer itself;" and not that other spurious sort whose characteristics are flippancy and conceit, and whose aim, consisting in a desire merely to perpetuate itself without any regard to the ultimate goal of truth, ought only to be deplored, and not encouraged.

Says the founder of the Cartesian philosophy, after describing the gradual process of his negative criticism, and under a due appreciation of the difference between a genuine and a spurious skepticism: "For all that, I did not imitate the skeptics, who doubt only for doubt's sake, and pretend to be always undecided; on the contrary, my whole intention was to arrive at certainty, and

to dig away the drift and the sand until I reached the rock or the clay beneath."

Philosophically considered, it seems, therefore, almost like a truism to assert that skepticism is a condition of progress; and that in its action there is a positive as well as a negative side to be considered.

So long as we recognize the existence and supremacy of mind, skepticism is not only a condition, *it is also a necessity.* Rational, philosophical doubt, however, is one thing; irrational, superficial doubt quite another.

"Sands form the mountain, moments make the year."

So said Young in his appreciation of the stupendous works of time, and the principle is equally applicable to the process of our intellectual growth; a principle of gradual accumulation, which, it will be easily seen, makes skepticism indispensable as a condition of progress, while it also gives an additional emphasis to the Italian proverb, "He who knows nothing doubts of nothing." Skepticism and curiosity are the great springs of knowledge.

In conclusion, therefore, the spirit of the age being a spirit of inquiry, we are not for this reason warranted in supposing, as some would have us believe, that it is the result of a feverish excitement, an unnatural and delirious condition. On the contrary, it is the returning glory of that intellectual empire whose power and beauty having temporarily departed with the decline of Grecian culture, reappears on the horizon, giving us promise of a brighter day; while it also indicates an enlarged and growing appreciation of that truth so beautifully and so powerfully expressed by Sophocles in his Antigone:

"Reason, my father, by the gods is given
To men, the noblest treasure we can boast."

ANCIENT FAITH AND MODERN CULTURE.

ADMITTING, as we must, if we are candid with ourselves, that, in many respects, the prevalent idea of education is scarcely in advance of that spirit of sophistry which Socrates so forcibly and effectually denounced, it cannot, at the same time, be denied that there exists also a large class whose sentiments decidedly favor a revival of the Socratic spirit, at least so far as its search after principles is concerned; a disposition, in fact, which, because it is so deeply imbued with the elements of rationalism, necessarily separates many of the deepest and most earnest thinkers of the present day from those earlier forms of faith so heartily venerated by their cotemporaries, and, to a certain extent, inseparable from the spiritual life of our ancestors. Or, to express the same subject in another form: The modern mind has become deeply impressed with the idea that the world moves intellectually, as well as physically, and that, as a consequence of this motion, it is not only incumbent on us to cultivate in an individual sense the spirit of restlessness and intellectual discipline alluded to in the preceding chapter, but also to embody it in a general or universal sense under the form of Culture. On the one hand "there is the church, with its ecclesiastical usages;

its Sunday school for the children; its devotional meetings in the week, and its Sunday teaching and worship—all acknowledged as good for those who like them, and are willing to accept what people thought or believed was true a hundred years ago." On the other, there is this rationalistic and progressive spirit to which we have referred; and whose influences, however much they may be misunderstood or underestimated now, are, nevertheless, destined to make a forcible and lasting impression on the civilization of the future. Resting as it does on the basis of a scientific interpretation of human nature, and rebelling against that commonly received theological estimate whereby an intelligent progress of culture is supplanted by a miraculous transformation of grace, it not only repudiates the idea of progress through the assistance of ecclesiastical nostrums, crutches and ambulances, but also insists upon a general recognition of natural laws, in place of miraculous interpositions and special dispensations of grace; which are, after all, nothing but the outgrowth of our intense egotism and ignorance.

True it may be, as Mr. Tylor has remarked in his admirable work on "Primitive Culture," that "the world at large is scarcely prepared to accept the general study of human life as a branch of natural science, and to carry out in a large sense the poet's injunction to 'account for moral as for natural things.'" Certainly, to the "world at large," this is the case; and is likely to be for some time to come. If, however, we are prepared to enter more fully into an examination of what the "world at large" really means, we shall most certainly discover that this dissentient spirit is largely, if not entirely, due to the existence of a certain amount of mental imbecility, rendering possible a belief in causeless freaks, chance,

nonsense, and indefinite unaccountability. Occasionally there may be some honorable exceptions, whose opposition is the result of a philosophic caution; but these, "like angel's visits, are few and far between;" while with the majority, it is, indeed, true, as Cicero has expressed it: "The common rabble estimate few things according to their real value; most things according to the prejudices of their mind." A sentiment which has lately been demonstrated to a considerable extent in the treatment bestowed upon Darwin's "Descent of Man;" and according to which the scientific argument has been altogether swallowed up in that feeling of popular arrogance which not only refuses to test the subject in the clear, dispassionate light of reason, but also would regard all Darwinists either as apes themselves, or, at least, as advocates of a dark and portentous theory unworthy of our position as men, and bidding fair to annihilate every lofty aspiration, and every worthy conception of human destiny. Is, however, this position a reasonable one; and is there anything so very monstrous in the mode of reasoning which, in pursuing our genealogy, refuses to stop short at "who was the son of Adam;" but carries it back a step further to "who was the son of a monkey?" Certainly the answer, to every enlightened mind, must necessarily be in favor of Darwinism, and opposed to the arrogant prejudice which would cling to the nearly obsolete idea of an angelic parentage, instead of considering the subject under the light of an unbroken line of continuity, and a gradually ascending process in the scale of creation. Nor is it when we look at some few of the results which Darwinism produces that we find that moral chaos which has frequenty been predicted as its inevitable consequence.

Even as a Darwinian, no sane man believes for a moment that there is no beauty in a virtuous and moral life; nor that property is any the less sacred because it may have originated in mere physical force; nor even that religion is less worthy of thoughtful consideration and respect because in its earlier forms, as an outgrowth of savage life, it bears the same relationship to our civilized conceptions that astrology does to astronomy, or alchemy to chemistry. No; in this respect, the fact is that as with culture, so with Darwinism. Men outgrow the ideas of their childhood; and as they ask for some broader and more comprehensive basis on which to rest their opinions, and from which to start in their method of reasoning for the future, so do they necessarily meet with opposition from those stagnant forces which have lain like an incubus on the world for years; and which, whatever the weight of their authority, are in the end compelled to be discarded, their influence neutralized, and the world made wiser and better for their loss.

As an example of this, we can easily understand how it was that, at an earlier period of our history, it was believed, with as much genuineness as persons believed in their own consciousness, that all disinterested love, and all beauty of thought and sentiment, would leave the world, should it be made to appear that it is not literally true that we are the descendants of a man and woman who were turned out of Paradise for following the instructions of a talkative serpent. Indeed, as it has been well said: "Even the statement that it might be an allegory, instead of an historical record, nearly frightened our prosaic ancestors out of their wits." According to their mistaken but conscientious opinion: "Remove one brick from the cunningly-adjusted fabric of orthodoxy,

prove that a line of the Hebrew Scriptures was erroneous, and God would vanish from the world, heaven and hell become empty names, all motives for doing good be removed, and the earth become a blank and dreary wilderness." Like all false methods of reasoning, however, the result has contradicted the prediction; and the course of human progress, although in some respects Sisyphean in its character, still moves on in obedience to that law of intellectual and moral development whereby each generation finds itself in advance of the past:

> "That each to-morrow
> Finds us further than to day."

And here we come to the direct cause of that difference and apparent antagonism betwen ancient faith and modern culture, which forms the subject of the present chapter, and which is so clearly visible to any one who will examine for a moment the tendency of the present age. In fact, that peculiar form of intellectual vigor and activity which we may not improperly define as the consciousness of the age; and from which it follows, as a necessary consequence, that, in proportion as society becomes permeated by the influences of modern thought, just so surely will the relics of mediævalism, now so prevalent, become gradually weaker, and ultimately obsolete: the discussion of "how many angels can dance on the point of a needle," giving place to the more rational task of discovering nature's laws, and their relationship to man as a member of the *genus homo*. Not that, in this sense, there will be any necessity to deny the existence of what we now call the supernatural; but that, in the enlargement of our views, the natural will have extended its dominion to the sphere of the

supernatural; and all things be reduced to that harmonious action of law and order which alone gives us a worthy conception of nature as the effect, and God as the cause. Or, in other words: When the scientific spirit, instead of debasing our ideas and enslaving us, as is sometimes said, in the search for men with tails, shall have given us a fabric of truth, possessing, like the Grecian Aphrodite, a two fold character—*Πάνδημος*, as expressing its function in a general sense; *Οὐρανία*, as especially related to the higher instincts of man's nature—his spiritual aspirations, and the nobler development of his faculties.

But to return to that feeling of terror with which some persons regard the spirit of the age, and which causes them to anticipate nothing but the most deplorable consequences from the encroachments of modern culture —consequences, indeed, which it is customary for our theologians to denounce as leading to the destruction of the religious sentiment, the inauguration of an atheism laden with iniquity and subject to no moral restraint—we can only say that, in this respect, the more thoughtful we are, the more careful will we be not to commit ourselves to any such hasty and unwarrantable conclusion. At least we will be entitled to demand from our opponents what they understand to be the constituent elements of religion and morality; and, according to their answer, determine how far they are, or are not, competent to decide upon the subject. For them, it may be but the echo of that narrow and exclusive spirit which has nothing but hostile zeal to lavish upon Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrism, and all other phases of religious or ethical thought not identical with their own. For us, we may prefer, as we most certainly shall,

the comprehensiveness of Baring Gould, defining the motive force in religion to be "the stretching toward some spiritual aim which we call truth." Or, as he remarks in another place, and where he certainly expresses in the clearest manner the modern idea, that the essence remains, although the forms of its expression are subject to variation and change: "The world, in all ages, has teemed with religious beliefs of the most diverse forms of ceremonial expression, strongly contrasting in system and opposed in dogma. Here the priest smears with human blood the idol which will be overthrown on the morrow by the missionary of another creed. The gods of one nation are the devils of their neighbors. Here fathers pass their children through fire to a god; and here men shelter and feed orphans as a work acceptable to their deity. These transfix their flesh with skewers, and those indulge in every lust, and both from a religious motive. One worships an ideal of beauty; another an ideal of ugliness. Jacob leans on his staff to pray; Moses falls flat on his face: the Catholic bows his knee, and the Protestant settles into a seat."† Or, again, for them it may be an assent to the Thirty-nine articles of the Episcopal church; or, perchance, an endorsement of the dogma of the Pope's infalibility; while for us, it may be that truly liberal and strictly philosophic definition as given by Max Müller, and which, from its exquisite beauty and force of expression, we quote at length: "It was supposed at one time that a comparative analysis of the languages of mankind must transcend the powers of man; and yet, by the combined and well-directed efforts of many scholars, great results have been obtained, and

† "*Origin and Development of Religious Belief*," by S. B. Gould, M.A.

the principles that must guide the student of the science of language are now firmly established. It will be the same with the science of religion. By a proper division of labor, the materials that are still wanting will be collected and published and translated; and when that is done, surely man will never rest until he has discovered the purpose that runs through the religions of mankind, and till he has reconstructed the true *Civitas Dei* on foundations as wide as the ends of the world. The science of religion may be the last of the sciences which man is destined to elaborate; but when it is elaborated, it will change the aspect of the world, and give a new life to Christianity itself."‡

In this connection, too, it is gratifying and encouraging to us to discover that, even as far back as the second century, Clement of Alexandria, and Justin Martyr, both advocated, with manly courage and remarkable ability, this very doctrine of liberality and universality for which we moderns are now contending so earnestly; and which we cannot otherwise than regard as the fundamental basis of all our ideas respecting religion and its relationship to those other educational influences classified under the comprehensive term, *culture*. Upon this subject, says Clement of Alexandria: "God is the cause of all that is good. Only, of some good gifts, he is the primary cause—as of the Old and New Testaments; of others, the secondary—as of (Greek) philosophy. But even philosophy may have been given primarily by him to the Greeks: before the Lord had called the Greeks also. For that philosophy, like a schoolmaster, has guided the Greeks also, as the Law did Israel, toward

‡ "*Chips from a German Workshop*," by MAX MÜLLER, M.A.

Christ." § And again : "It is clear that the same God to whom we owe the Old and New Testaments gave also to the Greeks their Greek philosophy, by which the Almighty is glorified among the Greeks." ‖ In a similar manner, although somewhat more powerfully, also speaks Justin Martyr in his "Apology" (A. D. 139) : "One article of our faith, then, is, that Christ is the first begotten of God, and we have already found him to be the very *Logos* (or universal reason) of which mankind are all partakers ; and, therefore, those who live according to the *Logos* are Christians, notwithstanding they may pass with you for atheists ; such, among the Greeks, were Socrates and Herakleitos, and the like ; and such, among the Barbarians, were Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others, whose actions, nay, whose very names, I know, would be tedious to relate, and therefore shall pass them over. So, on the other hand, those who have lived in former times in defiance of the *Logos*, or reason, were evil, and enemies to Christ, and murderers of such as lived according to the *Logos ;* but *they who have made the Logos, or reason, the rule of their actions are Christians*, and men without fear and trembling." Nor is this an exaggerated statement ; for although it seems inevitable that there should exist in all ages a certain class, who whether from short-sightedness or mental imbecility, would so far circumscribe the sphere of religion as to make it dependent on certain dogmatic forms, instead of fundamental principles, inhering in the nature of things, there are yet others who prefer the comprehensiveness, as well as the profounder estimate, of Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria.

§ Stromata, Liber I, chap. 5. ‖ Stromata, Liber VI, chap. 5.

Following in the footsteps of Lucretius, and perceiv- that the evils of superstition, bigotry, and fanaticism have their root in religion; and believing, also, that Epicurus conferred a lasting benefit when he "first dared to lift the veil from the eyes of man, and assert his natural liberty"—we may find at least a partial justification for those who, in the first impulse of their antagonism against these evils, would totally destroy the religious sentiment. In the nature of things, this is, however, impossible. Religion, in some form or other, as the history of the world has shown, is not only indispensable to, but is actually inseparable from, all that we know of human nature, or can predicate concerning human existence. In fact, that, after all the analytical and crucial tests we can apply to it, it still remains what W. Von Humboldt has said of it: "Religion is implanted in the very nature of man;" its quality depending, of course, on that stage of culture to which we have arrived.

Admit this, and we have at once a different estimate; an estimate, too, which, in addition to the general enlargement which it gives to our views of human nature and human destiny, convinces us also that, however formidable the differences between culture and religion may seem *superficially*, they do not *really* exist otherwise than as a part of those deceptive phenomena which it is the especial function of all knowledge to relegate to their true condition—*as appearances only.*

Following out this train of thought, therefore, it will be easily seen that, although there certainly does exist a spirit of alienation, and to some extent antagonism, between modern thought and the faith of our ancestors, it by no means follows, that, in consequence of this, we are to witness nothing but the disintegration of society, the

destruction of all moral and spiritual beauty, and the introduction in their stead of a chaos so dreadful that virtue's only office will be to sit and weep among the ruins:

> "There is a temple in ruin stands,
> Fashioned by long forgotten hands;
> Two or three columns, and many a stone,
> Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown."

But no; this cannot be. For the gloomy spirit of Byron, we will readily accept that of Bowring; and, as an illustration of the beneficent influences of enlightenment, cheerfully indorse his sentiment:

> "Culture's hand
> Has scatter'd verdure o'er the land;
> And smiles and fragrance rule serene,
> Where barren wild usurp'd the scene."

Because, therefore, modern culture is averse to certain dogmas constructed on an emasculated idea of progress, and whose influence on the world can only be compared to that of a terible nightmare, it surely does not follow that the spirit which venerates the supremacy of mind, and believes that the world is ruled by God, and not by the Devil, must of necessity be injurious to what it cannot destroy, viz., "that indestructible granite of the human soul—religious faith," as Max Müller calls it. For it must be observed, in this connection, that while it is one thing to repudiate theology as a system of unweildy, inconsistent, inflexible, and, in many respects, monstrous creeds and dogmas, it is quite another to include in the same category the essence of religion, pure and simple. Under the first condition, the original sentiment is so far dwarfed and perverted that it is only here and there that we

catch glimpses of the beauty concealed beneath the dense mist of incongruities and absurdities. Under the second condition, we understand at once, in using the term religious sentiment, that we are endeavoring to express in finite terms a principle which is quite as universal in a spiritual sense as the law of gravitation is in a material sense. A sentiment, in fact, which, because it is so truly grand in in its universality, and so exquisitely beautiful in its individualty, § is in every sense worthy of its author; while it also acts on man like some force of spiritual light and heat which expands, develops, and irradiates according to the measure of our true humanity, and the conditions consequent on the intellectual type of the age. Differ from theology we must: it is of man; and, therefore, fraught with error. Venerate the religious sentiment we most certainly and most cordially do: it is of God; and, therefore, rests on the indestructible bases of truth. Theology is human: religion is divine. Cœval, as the origin of our religious instinct necessarily was, with the formation of the human soul, it may be as truly said of it, as of our psychical capabilities:

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar."

Or, again, as Keble expresses it, when referring to the same sentiment under its higher form of manifestation,

§ As an example of this spirit of beauty, which, at times, rises to the ecstatic sense of saintly devotion, we have, perhaps, no better illustration than that afforded us by the artist Giotto—"that gentle monk," as Mr. Lecky observes, "who was never known to utter a word of anger or bitterness; who refused without a pang the rich mitre of Florence; who had been seen with tears streaming from his eyes as he painted his crucified Lord, and who never began a picture without consecrating it by a prayer."

and more especially in its sublimated character of Christian love and purity:

> "They seem to dwell
> Above this earth—so rich a spell
> Floats round their path where'er they move,
> From hopes fulfilled and mutual love."

And so it is that this religious sentiment, this yearning after the Infinite, is everywhere present; it is universal; it is indestructible; it is indispensable. In the far-off utterances of the Veda and the Zendavesta its voice may be heard; it rises into the majestic speculations of Plato; it speaks to us with an exquisite beauty and indescribable pathos in the Sermon on the Mount; it is with us now, and in many a soul beats with the rich pulsations of a noble life. Instead, therefore, of culture being the natural enemy of religion, it follows necessarily that the more fully we understand the true character of their respective functions, the more clearly will we perceive that, although the cultivation of our faculties necessitates a constant change in our views generally, it is one thing to attempt the dissipation of theological beliefs which are no longer fitted to our intellectual growth, and quite another to attempt the destruction of a principle that lies at the very foundation of human existence. And this brings us to a more direct examination of that law of continuity and endless development which, independently of its attractiveness as a theme of abstract science, is, also, a necessary link in the chain of argument which would emphasize culture as a chemical process, through which the dross of ignorance and superstition is separated from the pure gold of truth; a process, indeed, which, however enigmatical or even contradictory it may sometimes appear,

is, nevertheless, moving us on gradually to the realization and attainment of a higher and nobler purpose of life; and which, because it recognizes the potency of influence as embodied in the hereditary character of social, moral, and intellectual forces, at once connects the present with the past, and binds the future to the present, according to the same immutable law. Or, as was remarked by an uncivilized chief to Casalis, the African missionary: "One event is always the son of another, and we must never forget the parentage." A fact which we must all, sooner or later, realize as an indispensable feature in our conceptions of progress. Indeed, it may, with all safety, be assumed, that if we expect to look modern life in the face, and comprehend it by a merely superficial estimate, we shall certainly find ourselves grievously mistaken. What we are, is in the strictest sense, the result of what we have been becoming through a gradual process, connecting at every step, the higher forms with the lower, and thereby adding, at every stage of advancement, an additional link to that golden chain of cause and effect; which not only gives permanence and consistency to civilized life, but which, also, connects the whole human family in one comprehensive network of interdependence and similarity of interest. In the process and development of culture, as in the phenomena of the material world, the more thoroughly we examine the subject, the more clearly will we discover that causeless spontaneity can only exist as the product of ignorance and superstitious imagination; while chance and irregularity in the method of Divine government are only possible with the vulgar and uneducated. For them there may be no evidence of design and regularity of procedure in those methods through which,

for instance, our views of nature have been gradually transformed from the diseased and monstrous ideas of savage life to their present condition; no evidence of order and harmony of development in the transition which, at one end, gives us the ridiculous superstition prompting the women of Greenland to pinch their dogs by the ears during an eclipse, so as to ascertain whether the end of the world is at hand, and at the other end gives us Newton pointing his telescope and measuring the heavens; no indications of a gradual change in that process of thought through which we pass from the sun-worship of the Mexicans and Peruvians to that condition which enables us to determine the existence of particular metals in the sun, as revealed by the spectrum analysis. For us, however, this process of reasoning, or, more correctly, this absence of reasoning, can have no part. Beginning our point of observation at any given period in human history, we are still met by the same universal fact that human nature is governed in its development by law, and that those instances which seem to constitute glaring exceptions to the general rule are only so because our ethnographic knowledge is too limitited to comprehend the true circumstances of the case.

Thus, it is a mere truism to assert that modern civilization is the result, in a more highly developed form, of mediæval civilization, which is also a development from the order of civilization represented in Greece, Assyria, and Egypt; while this, again, by a process of analogous reasoning, is also the result (subject to intermediate conditions) of those earlier ages when man in his primitive condition first looked upon the majestic aspect of nature, and when the faculty of

reason existed rather as a possibility than as a potent influence. Nor is it to be denied, even if we regard this law of continuity as a philosophical thesis rather than an established fact, that it commends itself under a peculiar form of attractiveness to every thoughtful mind, while it also induces a more vivid realization of progress as a process of gradual growth, and not some legerdemain method of instantaneous transition. Says Froude, in his "Essay on the Philosophy of Catholicism:" "We, with this glorious present which is opening on us, we shall never enter on it, we shall never understand it till we have learned to see in the past, not error, but installment of truth, hard-fought-for truth, wrung out with painful and heroic effort. The promised land is smiling before us; but we may not pass over into the possession of it while the bones of our fathers, who labored through the wilderness, lie bleaching on the sands, or a prey to the unclean birds. We must gather their relics, and bury them, and sum up their labors, and inscribe the record of their actions on their tombs as an honorable epitaph."

And, so we must, since it is only by approaching the subject under this condition of thought that we can safely insure ourselves against that inflation of self-esteem which would lead us to consider the present age a sort of oasis in the desert; a solitary ray of light, in striking contrast to the darkness that preceded it. In this respect, the truth is that the more carefully we examine the historical and philosophical aspect of culture, and the more generally sound principles of knowledge are disseminated, the more clearly will we perceive the force and beauty of the progression-theory of civilization as contrasted with its rival, the degenera-

tion theory; at the same time that our position necessitates an attachment and grateful remembrance of those who, in former ages, have labored in the cause of truth. For instance, Socrates, in his grand and noble sublimity; Plato, in his wonderful depth of thought and keeness of spiritual insight; Aristotle, in his profound and comprehensive system of physics, ethics, and metaphysics; Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others among the Patristic philosophers; Plotinus, and Porphyry among the Neo-platonists; and last, but not least, the intellectual luminaries of more modern times; all these will live, not only in name, but in actual verity, to the student of the future. Time, as it operates on the nations of the world, affecting their destiny now in one way, and now in another, is not the result so much of any great and sudden upheaval, as it is the product of a long chain of influences operating, for the most part, like the vital forces in the material world, silently, but effectually. And so it is with culture. In a manner no less grand than that which geology reveals to us as the history of the earth, the human mind passes necessarily through a variety of phases in its process of education. Like geology, it has had its different ages, each one characterizing some particular phase in our process of gradual advancement. Like geology, also, although there has been everywhere the strictest uniformity in the method, the results have been characteristic of a wonderful diversity and development.

Nor is this all that can be said in favor of that method of reasoning which connects the present with the past, the future with the present, and, according to which, although there may seem an occasional hiatus in

the history of humanity's progress, there still exists a higher law which precludes the possibility of isolation, and renders every age the legitimate offspring of its predecessor.

As a further illustration of the subject, and more especially so as exemplifying the indestructible character of influence when applied to the emotional side of our nature, we have only to bear in mind the enormous influence which mediævalism still exercises over a very large portion of the civilized world; and which, although not so directly applicable to us as Protestants, still possesses a considerable charm, in spite of its errors, for every thoughtful and earnest mind.

From the days of Albertus Magnus, and his efforts to distinguish between the vegetable, the sensual, and the intellectual life, we certainly have made the most wonderful progress; but, wide as the distance between us may appear, there still exists a bond of connection which makes it beautifully true, as said by Rogers in his "Pleasures of Memory":

> "Lull'd in the countless chambers of the brain,
> Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain;
> Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise,
> Each stamps its image as the other flies."

For instance, let us take Albertus Magnus as an example, and is there not a fascination about the old schoolman, as we think of him in his monastery, prosecuting his studies and investigations with a spirit of earnestness and devotion, and at the same time cherishing the fond hope that he was gradually realizing the golden chain that connects the lowest form of insect life with the highest angelic intelligence? Certainly the answer of every candid mind can only be one at least

of partial appreciation. A sentiment, too, which will enable us to enter more fully into the spirit of Matthew Arnold's remark when, in speaking of Oxford as his *alma-mater*, he says: "Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our country, so serene!

There are our young barbarians, all at play!

And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us—to the ideal, to perfection, to beauty, in a word—which is only truth seen from another side."‖ A beautiful tribute certainly. What shall we say of it, however? Is it for us but a dream, wherein we invest the past with a beauty and a power which it did not possess? No; certainly not. For although mediævalism, as we all know, was marvelously productive of many forms of error, there still lingers a spirit of beauty about it which we cannot consistently ignore, and which, as measured through the dim vista of the past, still fascinates and allures us with the power of an irresistible charm; a charm, indeed, which, if we carefully consider the present condition of the religious world, is scarcely less influential than the spirit of Greece is in an intellectual sense. Examining, therefore, our position in its true light, it will be seen at once that the only philosophical condition of thought consists in fully recognizing the principle of continuity as an indispensable condition of progress; and, also, by fairly estimating the services

‖ "*Essays in Criticism*," by Matthew Arnold.

rendered us by the past, to so far apply the many valuable lessons they have afforded us as to insure more fully our own advancement, and the consequences we necessarily entail on the age succeeding us. Here, however, the allegiance ends; here the paths diverge; and modern culture, much as it may respect its antecedent conditions, finds, also, that there is to every age an especial function assigned, a peculiar form of thought and sentiment, without which it could possess no leading characteristic destinguishing it from its predecessor, no individuality determining its position in the history of the world and the great problem of human progress. And thus we arrive at a more definite understanding respecting the relationship between ancient faith and modern culture; a position which, in proportion as it is realized and appreciated, so far will it remove many idle fears and unfounded anticipations. Ages change, minds oscillate, the past is looked on as a dream, and though the future, in the language of Milton,

> "Is all abyss,
> Eternity, whose end no eye can reach,"

yet there still exists an indestructible chain of causes and effects, a gradual process of advancement, which encourages and supports us under the most trying emergencies, and which induced so high an authority as Gibbon to remark: "We may, therefore, acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion that, every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race." ‖

‖ "*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*," Chap. xxxviii.

But, it may be said, the culture of the present age seeks to accomplish that which has always been regarded as doubtful, and which Pascal even went so far as to declare was impossible, that is, to make moral truth geometrically convincing; and, having done so, to make it harmonize with faith, the essence of which consists in denying, to a great extent, the utility of rational bases. Is this, however, really the case, or is it a misconception, growing out of what we are so apt to consider the natural estrangement and antagonism between religion and culture? Is it not possible for culture and religion to so far blend into a harmonious and beautiful system of truth; and, in so doing, to transmute those dry and merely dogmatical forms of faith, to which we are so largely accustomed, into sentiments that are higher, purer, and better; a revivified faith, in fact, more comprehensive, more glorious, more beautiful than that which is, more deeply expressive of that strange, mysterious sense that binds us to the Infinite. Or, to put the same sense in other words:

> **"Science was faith once; faith were science now,**
> **Would she but lay her bow and arrow by,**
> **And arm her with the weapons of the time."**

Elements which at first sight seemed antagonistic are gradually made to assimilate. Indeed, in a manner somewhat analogous to the fabled properties of the philosopher's stone, a process of gradual transmutation is induced, caused by the thoughts of one age becoming blended with those of another, and thus producing the result which we call progress. Old ideas and formulas pass away, new ones are formed, and man, the two-sided being, the creature of reason as well as sentiment, is again and again made to feel that he is a

progressive animal. For, it must be remembered, that whatever explanation we may offer as to the cause of it, our world has been from the beginning an arena of contest, an alternation between light and darkness; first, of angry and discordant elements, according to the theory of Laplace; then, a prolonged and severe struggle for the revival of the fittest, according to Darwin; and, to the present day, a constant warfare between the higher and lower nature in man. To aid us in this, religion takes poor human nature in her arms, and, like an affectionate mother, wipes away all tears, pours healing balm into our wounds, and tells us of that brighter world, to which we are all tending fast. To assist us also in the same direction, and to determine more fully the triumph of virtue over vice, culture places us under a process of perpetual purification, elevates and ennobles our moral and esthetical judgments, while it also teaches us more and more to realize and appreciate all forms of moral beauty, all forms of intellectual grandeur; in short, encourages everything which exalts our conception of human nature and ennobles our views of life. In the words of Mr. Shairp: "Culture proposes as its end the carrying of man's nature to its highest perfection, the developing to the full all the capacities of our humanity. If, then, in this view, humanity be contemplated in its totality, and not in some partial side of it, culture must aim at developing our humanity in its Godward aspect, as well as its mundane aspect. And it must not only recognize the religious side of humanity, but if it tries to assign the due place to each capacity, and assign to all the capacities their mutual relations, it must concede to the Godward capacities that paramount

and dominating place which rightfully belongs to them, if they are recognized at all. That is, culture must embrace religion, and end in it."‖

But, says the same writer, in another place: "Gœthe, the high-priest of culture, loathes Luther, the preacher of righteousness. The earnestness and fervor of the one disturb and offend the calm serenity which the other loves. And Luther, likely enough, had he seen Gœthe, would have done him but scant justice." And here, it seems to us, Mr. Shairp falls into a train of despondency which is hardly consistent with his preceding remarks, and which is certainly at variance with an enlarged conception of those laws determining the growth and development of human nature. From the nature of man, and the conditions by which he is surrounded, culture necessarily creates a series of gradations, separating the few from the many; but this being the case with culture, it surely is not reasonable to satisfy ourselves with an imperfect estimate of religion, and, in so doing, deny to it the potency of a sentiment which is quite as powerful in the moral universe as the laws of attraction and repulsion are in the material world; a sentiment, indeed, which compels us to acknowledge that, in religion as well as in culture, there are different degrees, affiliating those who stand upon a common intellectual and moral plane, repelling those who stand beneath it. ¶

‖ "*Culture and Religion in Some of their Relations*," by J. C. SHAIRP, Principle of the United College of St. Salvator and St. Leonard, St. Andrews.

¶ In this connection, we are, of course, aware of all that can be said in favor of that common principle of equality upon which all religion hinges; but even in admitting this, it cannot be overlooked that this is a statement rather as regards man in the sight of God, than it is of our reciprocal relationship as members of society. In this sense, it is impossible to have everything reduced to a dead level.

It is the possession of a common spirituality that makes us one; it is the diversity requisite to unity that makes us many. Nor can it be otherwise so long as civilization retains its present complex character. Of one thing, however, we may be sure, and that is, that in proportion as ignorance is dissipated, and animalism subdued, just so surely will we witness a diminution of vice. In this sense, especially, culture comes to our aid, *supplementing*, *not destroying*, the functions of religion. Nor is this but a vain and idle dream, existing only in the culturist's imagination. Its fundamental postulate is mind, and in that postulate it rests upon the most substantial verity in the universe.

> "It is sure,
> Stamped by the seal of nature, that the well
> Of mind, where all its waters gather pure,
> Shall with unquestion'd spell all hearts allure.
> Wisdom enshrined in beauty—oh! how high
> The order of that loveliness."

In fact, the realization of the dream of ages, the hope of humanity, the promise of the future. Admit, therefore, that, in many respects, culture is compelled to make war upon some of our dearest and most beloved forms of faith, some of our most venerable traditions. Admit, also, that, in the process of transition, we will at times exclaim with Young:

> "How like a widow in her weeds the night,
> Amid her glimmering tapers, silent sits!
> How sorrowful, how desolate, she weeps
> Perpetual dews, and saddens nature's scene."

Yet is it only transitory; and the process which, for the time, seems made up of dissolution and decay, will ere

long reveal itself in its true character of progress and development.

> "Night wanes—the vapors round the mountains curl'd
> Melt into morn, and light awakes the world."

To conclude, therefore, although modern culture may seem unfriendly to those forms of ancient faith which we are accustomed to regard as embodying our highest interests, it is, after all, but a remedial application inseparable from our growth as rational and sentient beings. Stand still we cannot; and the act of moving forward necessitates changes which, although in some degree painful, are, nevertheless, essential. The *existence* of progress depends upon the *possibility* of change: the *act* of progression on the *process* of change.

And so it is that, in our day, we are compelled to recognize the existence of a process not unlike that alluded to by Lecky when, treating of the decline of mediævalism, he says: "For the long night of mediævalism was now drawing to a close, and the chaos that precedes resurrection was supreme. The spirit of ancient Greece had arisen from the tomb, and the fabric of superstition crumbled and tottered at her touch. The human mind, starting beneath her influence from the dust of ages, cast aside the bonds that had enchained it, and, radiant in the light of recovered liberty, remoulded the structure of its faith. The love of truth, the passion for freedom, the sense of human dignity, which the great thinkers of antiquity had inspired, vivified a torpid and downtrodden people, blended with those sublime moral doctrines and with those conceptions of enlarged benevolence which are at once the glory and the essence of Christianity; introduced a new era of human development, with new

aspirations, habits of thought, and conditions of vitality; and, withdrawing religious life from the shattered edifice of the past, created a purer faith, and became the promise of an eternal development." * So it was then, and so it is now. By gradually elevating our estimate of human nature, and, at the same time, taking a more definite stand in favor of liberty and reason, we are not only perpetuating the influence of that glorious Greece, whose very name has been the support and consolation of every great and noble mind, but we are, also, learning more and more to appreciate the fundamental fact that all human progress depends upon the sublimation and purification of the sentiments through the reason; and not the exaggerated cultivation of the former, at the expense of the latter. If, then, from the time of Socrates, and especially so from the picture which we have of him in Plato's Phædrus—that dialogue which has so deeeply moved the most thoughtful minds in all ages—there has been, at occasional intervals, an increasing tendency to apotheosize the attribute of reason, and if, also, in the present age, this tendency exists to a marked degree, it surely does not follow that we are moving in the wrong direction. Certainly not. To argue in this way would, indeed, be to place a strange estimate on the educational importance of culture, and the relationship which it bears to civilization. Take away the fact of mind—its indestructibility, its boundless capacity—and civilization becomes a sham, the idea of progress an impossibility. Admit it, however, and the claims of culture will be at once apparent. Indeed, it is not too much to say, that, when we have fairly realized the present aim and scope of culture, we

* "*History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*," by W. E. H. Lecky, M.A.

will at once discover a semblance, if not an analogy, between the present age and that wonderful revolution in English literature which took place in the sixteenth century, and which has been well described as the "Renaissance of the Saxon Genius." Actuated by a spirit similar to that which gave a new stimulus to the English mind, we are no longer content to believe that human nature is a mass of putrid corruption, rather than a wonderful organism meant to vibrate in harmony with the music of the spheres. On every side we are influenced by the quickening impulses of a new age; and it is impossible for us to withstand its influences.

Now, as then, we are laying aside the incubus of sadness and despair; and, instead of seeing in the world nothing but universal ruin and iniquity, we are growing more and more into a condition of consciousness the very opposite of asceticism. Not that we have lost a proper appreciation of those qualities of chastity, purity and religious force, which constitute the bases of asceticism, not that we are unable to appreciate the exquisite pathos, with which Milton immortalized religious purity and poetic grandeur:

> "Come pensive nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, steadfast, and demure,
> All in a robe of darkest grain,
> Flowing with majestic train,
> And sable stole of Cyprus lawn,
> Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
> Come, but keep thy wonted state,
> With even step, and musing gait."
> And looks commercing with the skies,
> Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes." †

† "*L'Allegro.*"

Not that we are unable to enter occasionally into those moods of thought which bring home to us a becoming sense of the solemnity and importance of life. Were this so, then were we, indeed, in a lamentable condition. It is not, however, in this that the change consists.

The great heart of humanity remains the same; but the intellectual type of the age is changed. And in this, it seems to us, is comprised the whole of that change which an increasing spirit of culture promises. The limited ideas of theology are fast giving way before the more comprehensive views of philosophy; but in the change, the idea of virtue is not destroyed nor impaired. On the contrary, the very ideas of beauty which culture generates are, in themselves, the best evidences that the the culturist's whole aim and purpose consists in emphasizing purity of character, as the one great end of all our hopes and efforts. For, it must be observed, in this connection, that although the present age is characterized by a greater freshness of feeling than the past, and although it indicates very strongly a return to the Grecian spirit, which sought for beauty everywhere, we are, also, very powerfully influenced by those conditions of rigid morality which Christianity has demonstrated to be beyond a doubt the safeguard of nations and individuals. In one sense, the aim of culture is necessarily to dissipate many absurdities which now exist under the guise of theological dogmas; but in another, and still more important sense, its object is to elevate our views of God and Man, to enlarge the horizon of our intellectual life, and thus to lift us gradually into a higher condition of consciousness and nobler existence. In the transition, what matters it if some of our pet theories and long-cherished dogmas are proved untenable. In the midst of this ever-changing

panorama, there must always remain one supreme and fundamental fact, viz.: Error is mortal, and cannot live forever; truth is immortal, and cannot die.

At times we may be called upon to shed tears as we consign our long-cherished ideas to the grave; but, in all such instances, it is but an earnest of a better immortality.

"I look, aside the mist has rolled,
The waster seems the builder too;
Upspringing from the ruined old,
I see the new!

'Twas but the ruin of the bad,
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whate'er of good the old time had.
Is living still."

And thus the world moves on; each age fulfilling its special work, and all combining toward a common end.

To a great extent it seems unavoidable that a very large portion of our time should be spent in unlearning the errors of the past. This is true of nations and ages, no less than of individuals and their brief period of existence. Yet, true as it is, it is also evident, on a careful examination, that there is a beautiful law of continuity controlling and pervading the general progress of the human race. Discouraging as the conditions may seem to some of us, it will always be found, in the long run, that all fluctuations of thought, all gradations of intellect, all revolutions in the world of mind, are but so many confirmations of the sublime and important truth expressed by Pascal: "Humanity is but a man who lives perpetually, and learns continually."

THE SUPREMACY OF LAW: ITS PHYSICAL AND PSYCHICAL CONDITIONS.

ACCEPTING it as an established fact that, in many respects, civilization bears a striking resemblance to barbarism, there is at least one important particular in which they are as far asunder as the poles, viz., the ideas associated with Nature and her methods of operation. In other words, the marked contrast between the crude ideas of the savage, believing all things subject to the capricious whims of the most capricious deities; and the truly grand and comprehensive estimate of civilized man, believing all things to be governed by law. For instance, during the earlier ages of the world, when day and night seemed capricious phenomena; or, when, as in the Australian legend, "the moon was a native cat who fell in love with some one else's wife, and was driven away to wander ever since"—there could be little wonder that those who beheld the phenomena should regard them as consequences resulting not from any regular process, but simply as the effect of contrary and opposing powers. As yet the human mind had risen no higher than the sentiment of wonder; and, as a consequence, it was but natural that the soul, seeking for its own prototype, should invest the

world of nature with those peculiarly mixed forms of imagination which we find everywhere existing; and which, entering in an especial sense into the constituent elements of civilization, determine all our estimates of man and nature.

Thus the main points of difference between an educated and uneducated people. Thus also the difference in different degress of civilization; all hinging on their approximation to the supremacy and universality of Law.

And this brings us to the realization of a principle which, because it embodies the whole realm of nature—determining its existence, and preserving its integrity—is also proclaimed by the more advanced minds, not merely as a truth dimly seen or vaguely surmised, but as the foundation of all sound philosophy; the *sine qua non* of all consistent reasoning, both with respect to the world of matter, and the world of mind; the measure, in fact, of our civilization, and the formative principle which, more than any other, so distinctly characterizes the thought of the present age. Born, as we now are, among these ideas, and experiencing, as we do, their influence from our earliest years, it is somewhat difficult for us to realize their true value and importance. But still the fact remains. The fables of our ancestors, and the glorious imagery with which they invested all natural objects, have all faded away. To some extent they still linger in the fairy lore of the nursery; but this is all that remains. By an effort of our imagination we may succeed in transplanting ourselves to those earlier and more rudimentary conditions which induced an uneducated people, living in the solitude of some dismal forest, to believe that the rustling of wind among the trees was but the echo of

voices in a distant country; or that the fresh and beautiful flowers of the morning had risen on the footsteps of an early god. In point of fact, however, they are for us but as the dreams of the past; dreams, it may be, which we sometimes like to dwell upon, but which, so far as their actual value is concerned, are strongly suggestive of Shakspeare's estimate:

> "Dreams are the children of an idle brain,
> Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
> Which is as thin of substance as the air,
> And more inconstant than the wind."

As the matter now stands, and as the result of those circumstances under which we are placed, we have passed from the rudimentary condition of wonder to the more advanced condition of intelligence.

Proportionately as science has established the idea of unity, and the supremacy of law in the realm of physical nature, just so surely has it acted in another direction, and produced a corresponding change in all our estimates of physical life, and the laws which determine man's progress as a rational and sentient being.

As the Duke of Argyll has said: "The reign of Law—is this, then, the reign under which we live? Yes, in a sense, it is. There is no denying it. The whole world around us, and the whole world within us, are ruled by law. Our very spirits are subject to it—those spirits which yet seem so spiritual, so subtle, so free. How often in the darkness do they feel the restraining walls—bounds within which they move—conditions out of which they cannot think! The perception of this is growing in the consciousness of men. It grows with

the growth of knowledge; it is the delight, the reward, the goal of science."*

And, in giving this definition, the Duke is, beyond all question, perfectly correct. And so, also, is he, when a little further on, in the same work, he asserts that, "The instinct which impels us to seek for harmony in the truths of science, and the truths of religion, is a higher instinct and a truer one than the disposition which leads us to evade the difficulty by pretending that there is no relationship between them."

As human beings, we stand upon the confines of two worlds, and, therefore, the very moment we establish the fact of law in the material world, we are, from the necessities of our nature, compelled to seek for a similar process in the realm of spiritual activities. But, it may be said, admitting all this, the question still remains an open one, whether, after all, there is not something sad and solemn in this change which our modern civilization imposes, and which, because it brings man more directly under the conditions of law, at the same time destroys much of that importance which we had hitherto associated with the idea of freedom.

Let us, therefore, examine the subject accordingly. Can it be that we have been dreaming in a pleasant sleep, which the sunrise of enlightenment renders no longer possible? Can it be that the very moment we commence to think profoundly, that instant we are compelled to feel the saddening influence of a voiceless universe, an inaccessible God? Can it be that only in proportion as we deal with the surface of things, and

* "*Reign of Law*," page 55.

lead a calm, unquestioning life, we can realize a sense of happiness?

> "Happy the many to whom Life displays
> Only the flaunting of its Tulip-flower;
> Whose minds have never bent to scrutinize
> Into the maddening riddle of the Root,—
> Shell within shell, dream folded over dream."

Can it be that, as we pass from the passive condition of a thoughtless existence, to the active condition of a thoughtful life, just so surely are we led into a sad and solitary state of utter helplessness; no sympathetic intercourse to cheer, no sense of reliance on a benevolent Creator? Is it so that, after all our noble aspirations, our long cherished-hopes, we are ultimately drifting into a vortex, where everything resolves itself into the doctrine of blind necessity, and our fondest dreams appear but so many spectres, signifying disappointment, despair, and nothingness? Is it true that, after all

> "An immense solitary spectre waits:
> It has no shape, it has no sound; it has
> No place, it has no time, it is, and was,
> And will be; it is never more nor less,
> Nor glad nor sad. Its name is Nothingness.
> Power walketh high; and misery doth crawl;
> And the clepsydron drips; and the sands fall
> Down in the hour glass; and the shadows sweep
> Around the dial; and men wake and sleep,
> Live, strive, regret, forget, and love, and hate,
> And know it. This spectre saith, 'I wait,'
> And at the last it beckons and they pass;
> And still the red sands fall within the glass,
> And still the shades around the dial sweep;
> And still the water-clock doth drip and weep,
> And this is all."

Alas! poor human nature, is this so; then have we lost, indeed, by the change from our earlier and simpler modes of thought, to those of the present day.

That it is not so, however, I propose to show. And this for the following reasons:

1t. Because the idea of law does not necessarily exclude the possibility of a personal God.

2d. Because the supremacy of law does not destroy the moral sense in man.

3d. Because prayer, when correctly understood, is essentially a function of our spiritual nature, and not the ridiculous impossibility which the common and merely vulgarized estimate represents.

As to the first of these considerations, therefore, what are really the facts of the case?

Not that there is one particle more of inconsistency in a theistical than in an atheistical or pantheistical conception of the universe. Not that it is a violation of reason to believe ourselves, in some sense, created in the image and likeness of God. Not that it is an absurdity to encourage those anthropomorphic ideas which reason and analogy compel us to associate with the existence of Divinity. Not that it is, in any sense, less reasonable, or less philosophical, as we stand in silent awe before the mystery of life, to believe in an intelligent rather than in an unintelligent Cause. Not that it is better for us to apotheosize Diodorus of Iasus, surnamed Cronus the Slow—who, having written a treatise on the Awful Nothing, died in despair—than it

is to immortalize the memory of his antagonist Stilpo, who made the idea of virtue the especial object of his consideration.

Not that it is wiser or better to regard human nature as a lone and wandering outcast than to believe in the possibility of a sympathetic intercourse between the creature and the Creator. Passing however, from the negative to the positive side of the subject, we are at once introduced into a group of ideas, which, even if we limit their operation to phenomenal subjects, afford us at least a *terra firma* on which to build the pyramid of our thoughts. By this we refer to that fundamental fact of human consciousness which compels us, even after we have passed over the scientific bridge of secondary causes, to recognize a First Cause as the beginning of all things; and which, at the same time, resting on an inherent need in our nature, suggests the idea of a personal God as the most rational and the most satisfactory explanation—a sentiment too, which, because it embraces the axiom *Quod sentio est* as truly as it does *Cogito ergo sum*, is at once both the Alpha and the Omega of philosophy.

Man exists; he is. His existence cannot be subjected to a process of proof. It is in itself its own evidence, and carries its own conviction with it. The material universe also exists. This also, as Berkeley† has shown, is inca-

† The favorite argument against Berkeley's theory of the non-existence of matter, and the most popularly effective, next to a "grin"—an argument, moreover, which is not confined to "coxcombs," nor to men like Samuel Johnson, of practical understanding, without any particular turn for metaphysical speculation, but is the stock argument of the Scotch school of metaphysicians, is a palpable *ignoratio elenchi*. The argument is perhaps as frequently expressed by gestures as by words, and one of its commonest forms consist in knocking a stick against the ground. This short and easy computation overlooks the fact that in denying matter Berkeley did not deny anything to which our senses bear witness, and therefore cannot be answered by any appeal to them. His skepticism related to the supposed substratum or hidden cause of the appearances perceived by our senses, the evidence of which, whatever may be its conclusiveness, is certainly not the evidence of sense.—JOHN STUART MILL.

pable of proof: "When you call me to believe in matter, you call me to assume a certain substratum to the things which I see, hear, taste. I cannot see, hear, taste that substratum. Why am I to assume it? Has not the course of all moral philosophy been to discard such assumptions as fictitious?"

Thus matter hinges on mind; and mind gives reality to the existence of matter. In proportion as we realize the truth of our own existence, so far, and so far only, are we assured of the existence of the world outside of us. Nor is this theory of Berkeley's the unreal and unfounded idealism which it is frequently supposed to be. Standing before the great and glorious volume of nature, in a truly philosophical attidude, the conclusion becomes irresistible that while it is strictly the prerogative of science to trace the laws and demonstrate the unity pervading the universe, it is, also, the legitimate function of philosophy to recognize the deep-seated instincts of humanity as indicative of mind's supremacy, accompanied by a consciousness of God's existence as an intelligent and benevolent Being. In fact, the existence of that primary and distinctly human concept which induced even Pyrrho, in his moments of deepest abstraction, to exclaim: "It is impossible to shake off human nature." And so it is impossible to shake off human nature; and this, too, not merely when we regard the term human nature as an environment influencing our philosophical speculations, but as that fundamental condition which gives us the disposition and ability to philosophize, and which, in order to produce a healthy action, demands the allegiance of our sentient as well of our rational faculties.

Through the suppression of our finer feelings, it may perhaps be possible to regard the idea of a personal God

as the relic of an earlier and unsophisticated age; but, just as surely as the sun shines, it becomes impossible to eradicate the sentiment; As we grow wiser and enlarge our conceptions generally, there can be no doubt that we will rise gradually to a higher and purer form of theism; but to suppose that the growth of civilization and the march of intellect will ever destroy the belief in an intelligent and personal Creator does seem to us the most inconsistent as well as the most discouraging view that can be taken either of man or nature. Nor is there more than a specious show of reasoning in those arguments which are so frequently urged against anthropomorphism Admitting that, in earlier ages, and possibly even now among contracted thinkers, anthropomorphism has been carried too far, the fact still remains, that any conception of Deity which does not recognize the quality of personality is either an absolute negation, or, at best, an unmeaning abstraction which distorts rather than exhibits the idea it seeks to represent. Whether we regard the subject in the light of a theological dictum, or a philosophical thesis, it cannot be too strongly insisted on that, although the supremacy of law necessarily neutralizes many of our earlier anthropomorphic conceptions, it does not destroy the idea of a personal God.

In fact, the more strictly philosophical we are, and the more extensive the evidence collected, the more clearly will we regard the universe, not merely as a wonderful piece of mechanism regulated by the presence of some blind force, but rather as the manifestation of an intelligent Being, whose qualities and characteristics are expressed in the wonderful combinations, collocations and adjustments in the material world, even as we express our own character and personality through the

natural language of external life. Nor is this all that can be urged in favor of this view, even if we rest our evidence mainly on the existence and universality of law; for, although it is evident that the conception of Deity in a scientific age must of necessity be different from that prevailing in an unscientific age, we cannot, at the same time, lose sight of the important fact that, as the theistical argument depends less upon the mode of production than on the character of the resulting product, therefore the creation of the world, whether effected mediately or immediately, through the operation of law, we are still warranted in believing in an intelligent, and, if an intelligent, inferentially in a personal Cause. In the words of Mr. Martineau: "We are told that it is fetishism to look on the world as instinct with living mind. If so, it is that imperishable element which fetishism has in common with the highest theism. We are told that it is the effect of philosophy to exorcise every spirit from the universe, and reduce it to an aggregate of unconscious laws. If so, it is at least that effect of philosophy which it shares with mere stupefying custom—an infirmity of technical habit; not any vision of what is special to its field, but an acquired blindness to what remains beyond. There is doubtless a different reading of the world present to the mind of the man of science, and to the soul of the poet and the prophet: the one spelling the order of its phenomena; the other, the meaning of its beauty, the mystery of its sorrow, the sanctity of its Cause. But seeing that it is the same world which faces both, and that the eyes are human into which it looks, we can never doubt that the two readings have their intrinsic harmonies, and that the articulate thought of the one will

fall at last into rythm with the solemn music of the other" §

And really, on a careful examination of the subject, this does look like the only consistent and common-sense view we can take of it. Between the experimental processes of the scientific man, and the intuitive glances of the poet, there may, indeed, appear a very wide discrepancy; but, after all, who will deny that there is a probability, as well as a possibility, of their harmonious action. In a certain sense, it is perfectly true that the anatomist concerns himself merely with structure, the naturalist with order and organization, the geologist with the stratification and changes of the earth, the paleontologist with the fossil remains of extinct plants and animals, while the poet and the philosopher are necessarily limited to a less specific knowledge in this direction. Possibly we may even go further, and accept the assertion of some scientists: "Apprehensible by us, there is no God." But even here, the possibility of a reconciliation is not destroyed or set aside. By a process of intellectual contortion and perverted reasoning, it may be possible to reduce temporarily, the fabric of nature to the condition of an indefinite pantheism, or an unmeaning nihilism; but that this can be any more than an evanescent form of error no one who thinks deeply will venture to assert. At the basis of the whole question, there still remains the very important fact that there is something more than mere process and change to be accounted for, *i.e.*, the fundamental fact on which all life, all change, all processes of evolution depend.

To deal, therefore, with the manifestations of growth

§ "*Essays, Philosophical and Theological*"

and development, and to exclude from our ideas *the Cause of these processes*, is altogether an erroneous and superficial estimate of the subject.

Set aside the idea of an intelligent Cause, and what we see in nature as law, order, and the most exquisite beauty and adaptation, resolves itself into a series of accidental combinations, a fortuitous concourse of atoms: a condition of thought which, it is hardly necessary to say, is quite as repulsive as it is absurd. Besides, if there be any merit in ontology as a science, it can only be because it embraces the possibility of an endless fruition, and not because it promises nothing but perpetual barrenness.

As science advances, and the supremacy and universality of law become more generally recognized and established, there must also be a corresponding development in the sphere of our higher consciousness, and a profounder recognition of God's presence, even in the simplest and most rudimentary forms of life. It is a postulate derived from our enlightened consciousness that God must be infinite; it is also a postulate of our human consciousness that he must be personal.

The early identification of personality with intelligence can never be wholly destroyed. Occasionally it may seem to decline, but as long as human nature remains unchanged, its destruction is impossible. Uncivilized man looks upon the world, and all things seem endowed with the elements of personality.

Civilized man looks on the same objects, he investigates their nature, discovers their uses, and applies them. For him there are no spirits in the wind, no awful eyes embodied in the stars, and yet he cannot escape the consciousness of an all-pervading personal Intelligence.

In the case of uncivilized man, the sentiment becomes pluralized, and thus produces polytheism. In the case of the cultivated man, the idea of the many is absorbed in the one; and thus, the course of civilization, although distinctly identified with the recognition of law and order, in place of irregularity and caprice, is also intimately associated with, and in a measure absolutely dependent on, the fuller and clearer appreciation of a God-made, and God-governed universe. In brief, the elevation of the affections along with the enlargement of the reason; thereby realizing the truth of Mrs. Heman's beautiful sentiment:

> "Spirit whose life-sustaining presence fills
> Air, ocean, central depths, by man untried,
> Those for thy worshipers hast sanctified
> All place, all time! The silence of the hills
> Breathes veneration; founts and choral rills
> Of thee are murmuring; to its inmost glade
> The living forest with thy whisper thrills,
> And there is holiness in every shade."

And now, as to the second branch of our subject: The relationship between the supremacy of law and the moral sense in man. Let us ask ourselves whether it is not possible to so far adopt a middle course as to avoid the Scylla of fatalism on the one hand, and the Charybdis of absolute freedom on the other. For, it must be observed that, although we are compelled to recognize man's freedom in some sense, we are also compelled to acknowledge his liabilility to law. In other words, if man is free at all, he can only be free within certain conditions, and not in that absolute sense which a superficial estimate has hitherto associated with his possession of rational and discriminating powers.

As men, we think, feel, and act under a sense of consciousness which, from its very nature, and the relationship it bears to our estimate of vice and virtue, demonstrates the possession of an ethical capacity which would be wholly unintelligible under a dispensation of fatalism. As men, we also derive much of our characters through the laws of hereditary transmission, the conditions under which we make our entrance into the world, the long chain of circumstances influencing us at every step, and that inseparable connection between cause and effect quite as real in the moral as in the material world.

Thus we are placed, as it were, between the contending elements of two opposing forces, each, apparently, indispensable, and yet so seemingly antagonistic that to admit the one is in the very admission apparently destructive of the other. Is this, however, really the case, and must we, in acknowledging the supremacy of law, deny to man the usefulness of his glorious attribute, reason; put out the eyes of conscience, and deny the usefulness and beauty of moral excellence! Surely this cannot be. Far down in the nature of things, in the constitution of man, in the order and government of the universe, there must be some point of contact at which these two antagonistic propositions may meet in harmony and friendly recognition. Omit the moral sense, and we lose half the beauty of the world; certainly all the beauty of the world as it applies to man. On the contrary, admit it, and even if we do not reproduce the fabled music of the spheres, we recognize, at least, those stupendous depths and heights in our souls which give to human nature such a momentous significance. To attain this desirable end, therefore,

and thereby to demonstrate the possibility of the co-existence of law and man's moral sense, it seems to us that our only consistent course is to recognize man's discriminating powers as a part of this very law—a reflex of Divinity, by means of which the Almighty, without in any sense destroying or even suspending the existence and operation of law, is enabled to communicate to his creatures a portion (infinitesimal though it be) of his own powers of appreciating the right and condemning the wrong. True, it may be urged in this connection, that there is a mystery connected with freedom which does not attach to the doctrine of fatalism; but, even if we acknowledge this, and admit, for the sake of argument, that the existence of evil is a barrier against the recognition of God's wisdom and benevolence, as well as against the validity of man's moral sense, it still remains true that, although the doctrine of necessity changes, it does not remove the difficulty. Of course, it is possible, by descending to the substratum of pantheistical philosophy, to elude the mystery of evil, by denying that there is any absolute difference between moral good and moral evil. In other words, to sum up the whole subject in the ontology of pantheism by declaring that, "Whatever is, is; and there is neither right nor wrong, but all is fate and nature." For us, however, who prefer to recognize in our moral nature the root of religion and ethics, this view is not only unsatisfactory, it is also, in the strictest sense, repulsive.

The realization, therefore, of man's relationship to law, and his dependence upon previous causes in which he has had no part, quite as much as on present effects in which he is the immediate agent, although they may

change our ideas as to the extent of human responsibility, do not, and cannot, destroy the existence and potency of the moral sense. The realization of an orderly sequence in nature is the direct result as well as the strongest evidence of our advancing civilization. The realization of our moral sense, and, in some degree, the potentiality of human freedom, are also direct results and indisputable evidences in the same direction. Corresponding with our appreciation of beauty and our depreciation of ugliness in insentient beings, we learn also to appreciate the beauty of virtue, and to deprecate the loathsomeness of vice in sentient beings possessed of a moral nature. Indeed, as an apt illustration and important corollary drawn from this analogy, it has been well said by an eminent authority: "The close connection between the good and the beautiful has been always felt; so much so that both were in Greek expressed by the same word, and in the philosophy of Plato moral beauty was regarded as the archetype of which all variable beauty is only the shadow or the image. We all feel that there is a strict propriety in the term moral beauty. We feel that there are different forms of beauty which have a natural correspondence to different moral qualities; and much of the charm of poetry and eloquence rests upon this harmony. We feel that we have a direct, immediate, intuitive perception that some objects, such as the sky above us, are beautiful, that this perception of beauty is totally different and could not possibly be derived from a perception of their utility, and that it bears a very striking resemblance to the instantaneous and unreasoning admiration that is elicted by a generous or heroic action. We perceive too, if we examine with care the

operations of our own mind, that an esthetical judgment includes an intuition or intellectual perception, and an emotion of attraction or admiration, very similar to those which compose a moral judgment." ‖

So, also, it is well to remember that the *fruit* of religion belongs, in all ages and under all conditions, much more to its code of morality and its ethical influences than to its theological dogmas or its ritualistic ceremonies. In fact, could we suppose a condition under which the latter had altogether ceased to exercise any influence, so long as the former retained their integrity, human progress would still remain a possibility; the beauty of virtue appearing more beautiful with every ethical advance, while vice in a corresponding ratio becomes more hidious, more detestable. Although we are therefore compelled to admit, from a scientific standpoint, that there is a perpetual developement in nature, and that this developement is at every stage subject to the conditions and requirements of law, we are not for this reason called upon to rule man's moral sense out of existence. Certainly we, in the mere admission of the existence of law, are very much modifying the generally received opinion of man's freedom and responsibility, but we are not denying that man has a moral consciousness which places him at the head of all created objects. According to the prevalent idea, man is free, *independently of all conditions.* According to the modified and more rational view, he is free only *within certain conditions*—conditions which, because they make up and determine the circumstances or relations under which we exist, are, therefore, the exact limitations of freedom. As the Duke of Argyll very forcibly observes:

‖ "*History of European Morals*," by W. E. H. Lecky, M.A.

"It seems to be forgotten that freedom is not an absolute, but a relative, term. There is no such thing existing as absolute freedom; that is to say, there is nothing existing in the world, or possible even in thought, which is absolutely alone entirely free from inseparable relationship to some other thing or things."* This, and this only, is the definition which the profoundest thought and the most careful observation warrant us in arriving at; and yet there is another branch of this subject which we are compelled to regard in an equally profound and earnest spirit. As a rational, sentient being, man must be free in some sense. Were it not so, then are all our purest thoughts, our noblest aspirations, but so many unreal existences which the march of science will soon scatter to the winds. Considered merely in this light, well, indeed, may we shudder as we hear the clanking of that adamantine chain of law with which scientific discovery seeks to manacle nature, binding her, Prometheus-like to the rock of necessity. Considered in this light, well indeed may we weep for the loss of that moral beauty which, in a less scientific age, so elevated and ennobled the formation of human character. But, as we have previously intimated, this is but one side of the picture. To a certain extent, we will be compelled to abandon many false ideas of man's freedom; and in place of the crude and imperfect views now so prevalent, to recognize in the fullest possible sense that, although man's condition is to a certain extent that of freedom, he is, nevertheless, only free within the bounds of law. But some may say this is a contradiction, for if it be true that law enters into and controls the realm of thought and volition, then is it not self-evident that freedom of action and moral responsibility

* "*Reign of Law.*"

are simply impossible. Contradictory, however, as this may seem, it is nevertheless soundly philosophical and consistent in fact. Indeed, if we may be permitted to use the argument of one who has bestowed much thought upon the subject, and whose views, it appears to us, presents this question in the strongest possible light: "Law, universal and invariable, in the realm of nature—law, universal, invariable, in the realm of human history—law, universal and invariable—yes, it must be so—the realm of individual consciousness. Everything happens according to law; and since law is the expression of Divine will, everything happens according to Divine will: *i.e.*, is in some sense ordained, decreed. You will ask, then, does not this absolute universality and invariability of law in every realm of nature, extending even to the inner realm of consciousness itself, annihilate the free-will of man? I answer, No; *it only limits free-will to its legitimate domain.*" ‖ And, really, after all that can be said by the most zealous opponents of modern science, this is the sum and substance of the matter; while it is, also, the only rational estimate we can place on man as a part of nature, and therefore, as subject to those arrangements and conditions of law and order which make up the integrity and guarantee the perpetuity of the moral as well as the material universe. Standing, therefore, before the majestic aspect of nature, and, at the same time, recognizing in every movement and every form of adaptation the existence of law, we are not warranted in abandoning the idea of a moral sense in man. The deepest researches of science, and the profoundest reflections of philosophy, both indicate the possibility of moral sense. In our earliest moments, and during our first impressions

‖ "*Religion and Science*," by Jos. Le Conte, Professor of Geology and Natural History, in the University of California.

respecting the supremacy and universality of law, it may be possible for us to be so far carried away in our neophytic zeal, and our momentary idolatry of science, as to rule man out of the universe altogether. We may even become momentarily spell-bound by the fascinations and the grandeur of physical science, and forget that there ever was a Socrates, a Plato, or an Aristotle. Beside the grandeur and immensity of the starry heavens, man may seem, indeed, to dwindle into insignificance; his individualty appearing more an idea than a fact. The immensity of the creation may overpower him, and cause him to sink into a condition which, were it permanent, would virtually annihilate or at least reduce him to a hopeless and helpless condition of littleness and limitation. Like the clouds, however, that sometimes conceal the brightness of the sun, these conditions are but of temporary duration; while time, that general panacea for all ills, causes us at last to awake to a realization of the truth. At last, experiences rouses us to a sense of consciousness, and the scene is changed. Science still retains its grandeur, its beauty, its usefulness; but in the return of our more sober thought, we have found that we can neither justify nor appreciate the processes by which we interpret external nature unless we recognize at the same time the nature of man. Certainly we cannot do this without, in some way, recognizing the fact of our moral consciousness; while we may even go further, and insist that in proportion as the adaptation of certain means to certain ends constitutes the most powerful evidence of an intelligent cause in the domain of physical nature, so, likewise, must this moral sense in man be given for a high and noble end. In some form, as experience proves, its existence is inseparable from the conditions of human life. In some sense, therefore,

we are not only compelled to recognize its existence; we are also bound to provide for its action and influence even under the most rigid conditions of law. Turning over the pages of geology, we find that the air, which we now breathe so freely, was once so loaded with poisonous carbonic acid that it was absolutely unfit for the support and sustenance of life. Gradually, by a chemical process, through which the quantity of carbonic acid was constantly being diminished, or absorbed into other forms of existence, the earth passed slowly but surely through the different phases of development which ultimately rendered it a fit habitation for man. This done, this point arrived at in the mighty process of creation, man comes upon the scene. All along, the entire movement has been regulated by the existence and supremacy of law; and in the new conditions of human life, there is no break in the chain. In an analogous sense, it would seem to us, we are fully warranted in interpreting the fact of our moral consciousness. Most certainly, unless it was designed to accomplish some useful purpose, it would neither have been implanted in the breast of man, nor yet would it be capable of those manifold gradations, ranging from the crude and imperfect ideas of savage life, to the chaste and humane sentiments of refined society. Like the earth, as it passed through its different geological changes, the soul of man is, in the strictest sense, amenable to law. Like the earth, it is also governed by a regular and irreversible mode of adaptation, which, while it enables us to recognize and appreciate the forms of beauty in the material world, at the same time produces in us a realization of moral and spiritual beauty, as the thing most to be desired by man.

"Beauty was lent to nature as the type
Of Heaven's unspeakable and holy joy,
Where all perfection makes the sum of bliss."

By all means, therefore, let us hold fast to the truths of science, and the universality and supremacy of law which all scientific discoveries demonstrate; but let us, at the same time, beware of that hasty generalization which would reduce man's nature to a level with the oyster, and which, in overlooking more than it looks at, refuses to recognize in him the existence of a thinking and responsible soul, as well as an organized body possessing the elements of materiality. Estimating the probabilities of the future, by the indications of the present, we know that there is much reason for believing that what we term the *moral sciences* will not rise directly to a much higher standpoint than they at present occupy. For the time being, it is probable that they will, in a measure, be subservient to the demands of physical science, and, therefore, receive only in a partial sense that thoughtful attention which they are fairly entitled to. Whether we regard it as an evil, or a natural consequence, in our process of development, there can be no doubt that there is, at least for the present, so strong a reaction against everything pertaining to the supernatural, that the demands of moral science, although incapable of being silenced or extinguished, are yet likely to suffer in the consequences of the reaction. From the fact that our ideas of moral progress have been hitherto derived from the shadowy regions of theology, it seems inevitable that there must be an interval of unlearning before the scientific period can fairly be inaugurated. Come, however, it must; and in the change, men will realize that the science of

nature presupposes and includes the science of man; the science of man embracing all those higher and nobler capabilities of our nature which induced the ancients to believe that man's knowledge of himself were worthy of emanating from the skies.

And this brings us to the examination of our last proposition, viz., the compatibility of prayer with the supremacy of law.

Under a due sense of its importance, let us, therefore, endeavor to enter into something like a proper appreciation of its claims, not merely as a philosopheme, but as a real and important condition in our estimate of man, and the circumstances under which we cultivate the growth and development of our higher consciousness. For, it must be observed, that unless we can discover some evidence of rationality or consistency in that attribute of our nature which expresses itself in prayer, then have we no alternative but to admit that we have been victimized by a barren idea, and that, instead of our prayerful instincts being the expressions of a deeply seated, fundamental law of our being, they are but the embodiments of a foolish and fanatical process—an illusion and a sham. Indeed, it is not only prudent, it is absolutely indispensable, if we would retain the idea of prayer as an intellectual conception, or a psychological necessity, that we should look the question fairly in the face.

Is it said that the moment we attempt to analyze the subject, so surely do we destroy its beauty, and demonstrate the impossibility of its efficacy; while reason, failing in its efforts to penetrate into the inner temple of our spiritual consciousness, reduces us to that condition

of deplorable blindness so powerfully expressed by Milton, in his "Samson Agonistes":

> "Oh! dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
> Irrevocably dark, total eclipse,
> Without all hope of day!"

To many minds, this is doubtless a fair example of their views; an earnest and conscientious conviction certainly, but, nevertheless, a mistaken one; while it is also one which arises solely from the very common, but very erroneous, idea that we can annihilate the passion for solving what is called the insoluble, and yet retain our human nature in its integrity. The diffiulties which beset the question of prayer are, therefore, not to be overcome by attempting to reduce our intellectual facilities to a merely passive condition.

Like Banquo's ghost, our troublesome questionings may disappear for a time, but just as surely will they reappear. Nor will it avail us aught to cry

> "I'll see no more."

Not so, for

> "Yet the eighth appears who bears a glass,
> Which shows me many more."

In fact, so clearly and so closely is the function of reason, blended with the elements of human life, that the very statement which denies the validity of reason is, in itself, a process of reasoning. From the possession of our rational faculties, we exist as men. From the cultivation of our rational faculties, we progress as men. "*Quot homines, tot sententiæ*," is not only true as a maxim; it is also expressive of that diversity in human nature which is fundamental because it rests upon the basis of reason.

Surely, therefore, it is of no avail to beg the question of prayer, by asserting that it is impossible to entertain rational ideas upon subjects which transcend the powers of reason. "Shall we dare to say that this advantage of reason, of which we so much boast, and upon the account of which we think ourselves masters and emperors over all other creatures, was given us for a torment."‡

Besides, in every other direction, the thoughtful man can very clearly discern the indications of law; and shall he be asked to consider prayer alone as being abnormal? Certainly not. If there be any value in prayer, it can only be because it rests on and derives its existence from certain conditions inhering in the nature of things; and not because man, as a spiritual being, is exempt from the conditions of law. The moment we lose sight of this important fact, and regard the subject according to the superficial and commonly accepted estimate, just so surely does the idea of prayer become but an imaginary and unreal existence; an impossibility, an absurdity, and not a legitimate result arising from the demands and necessities of man's nature.

By getting, however, something like a rational insight into the subject, the view is completely changed, and the existence of prayer demonstrated as a process whereby we open more fully the tendrils of our higher consciousness, thereby producing that change in ourselves which is always commensurate with the receptive attitude and capacity of the recipient. In other words, a process of action and reaction which, taking place

‡ "*Montaigne's Essays.*"

in the realm of our spiritual activities, enables every earnest soul, in some sense, to realize the everlasting canons of the Christian's faith: "Ask, and ye shall receive." "Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you."

Considered in this light, the act of prayer is not something foreign to man's condition as a part of nature; on the contrary, it is the perfectly natural expression of the highest and most important part of our nature; the conscious exercise of certain functions which enable us to rise above what Sir William Hamilton was so fond of calling "the dirt philosophy;" the realization of something answering to the demands of our higher nature, which enables us to appreciate the beauty of Montgomery's sentiment:

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Utter'd or unexpressed;
> The motion of a hidden fire,
> That trembles in the breast.
>
> "Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
> The falling of a tear;
> The upward glancing of an eye,
> When none but God is near."

It is not a superfluous effusion dependent on paroxysms of religious excitement; *it is* a regular and orderly procedure, based on man's needs and capabilities as a spiritual being.

Or, again, to place the subject in another form, it is perfectly reasonable to define the spirit of prayer as strictly identical with that remarkable experience of something answering to the demands of our psychical necessities, which can only be accounted for as a conse-

quence taking place in the realm of spiritual activities' not as an act of caprice, but as the embodiment and expression of fixed and irreversible laws—a psychological principle, in fact, upon which we may safely rest that form of Christian consciousness which bears witness to the efficacy of prayer as a mode of spiritual sustenance, and which also insists that the efficacy is so closely allied to the measure of frequency and earnestness as to suggest, in the most pointed manner, the existence and operation of an orderly sequence.

As rational beings, we cannot help thinking; as sentient beings, we cannot help feeling; and thus it is that in our moments of deepest despair, as well as in our moments of most refined existence, we cannot smother, we cannot dissociate, that movement of our spiritual consciousness which impels us to the act of prayer.

As Clement of Alexandria expresses it: "Prayer is, then, to speak more boldly, concourse with God. Though whispering, consequently, and not opening the lips, we speak in silence, yet we cry inwardly. For God hears continually all the inward converse. So, also, we raise the head and lift the hands to heaven, and set the feet in motion at the closing utterance of the prayer, following the eagerness of the spirit directed toward the intellectual essence; and endeavoring to abstract the body from the earth, along with the discourse, raising the soul aloft, winged with a longing for better things, we compel it to advance to the region of holiness, magnanimously despising the chain of the flesh."† So said the illustrious head of the Catechetical school at Alexandria; and, although we are nearly seventeen centuries older, the force and beauty

† "Stromata," Book VII.

of his views still possess a charm for every thoughtful mind. What he defines as the *Gnostic's* conception of prayer is fundamentally true as the only rational and consistent estimate we can place upon the subject. Indeed, so visibly is this sentiment a postulate of our higher consciousness, that it seems almost like a truism to assert that, in the uplifting of our spiritual emotions and the projection of our individuality into a sphere of devotional thought and sentiment, we are reasonably and consistently arranging certain conditions, which, by a law of reflex action, produce the most important consequences on the human soul. True, it may be urged in this connection, that this attidude postulates in some sense the identity of the ideal with the real; thus attempting the impossibility of merging two distinct existences into one. In answer to this possible objection, it may, therefore, be well to recall the important fact that "the world is governed by its ideals." A position which amply justifies the spirit of prayer, even allowing that it did no more than foster a spirit of contemplation, having for its aim the beautiful and true.

The influence between the spirit of God and the soul of man, may be, as it is in many respects, hopelessly inscrutable; but it is, for this reason, (as the experience of many an earnest soul can testify), no less real and genuine.‡

The aspiration and sense of communion with God, which necessarily make up every earnest prayer, are, therefore, not dependent on either a suspension or a violation of law, but on the functional action of man's spiritual organism, and the necessities growing out of his psychical

‡ "Real inward devotion knows no prayer but that arising from the depths of its own feelings."—W. Von Humboldt.

growth and development. So, also, as a further elucidation of this principle, when it is said in St. John's Gospel: "God is a spirit; and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth;" we have the statement not merely of a general truth, but also the profound expression of a psychological principle, quite as imperative and universal in its operation as are any of the well-known laws in the world of matter—the introduction, in fact, of a rational element into the spirit of prayer; and thus, the transformation from the absurdity of mere parrot-like utterance, to the perfectly reasonable and legitimate expansion of our spiritual faculties. If we attempt to consider prayer as an effort to influence or to change the result of certain physical conditions, we fall, unavoidably, into two monstrous absurdities, *i. e.*: we place ourselves in the ridiculous position of asking God to reconsider his purposes, and to change his decrees—conditions which necessarily imply the characteristics of imperfection and caprice—while we, also, forget the important fact that, as the material wants of individuals are as diverse as their conditions, it would be impossible for God to entertain them all, even if he were willing; at the same time that the subjection of law and order to the demands of human caprice could only end in chaos and confusion.

In offering, therefore, any prayer with the view of affecting nature in a physical sense, it is well for us to ask ourselves what we are demanding. For example, the amount of rain which fell yesterday, or at any other given time in this State, being the exact result of a long line of antecedent circumstances, and these circumstances being again dependent on the irreversible process of natural law, it becomes obvious that when we pray either that

God will send or withold the rain, we are asking, not merely that he will change circumstances as they exist at present, but also that he will, by substituting irregularity and caprice forlaw and order, destroy the regular sequence of natural phenomena—a supposition which is manifestly too absurd for any enlightenened mind to entertain for a moment.

Tested, therefore, as to its physical efficacy, prayer is beyond all question an absurdity; the lingering vestige of an earlier age, when the conception of God was of a grosser and inferior character; but no more suited to the present condition of the world's requirements than the swaddling-clothes of infancy are to the full grown man.

Not so, however, when we consider the subject in the light of man's spiritual nature, and his necessities as a spiritual being. Measured from this point, and tested at every step of our psychological experience, the efficacy of prayer follows directly as a reflex influence produced through the instrumentality of law, and not an abnormal condition dependent on an unhealthy overflow of religious enthusiasm.

To be genuine, its action must be steady, and, for the most part, silent. To be either of these, it must be based on those principles of law and order which render it a mode of spiritual sustenance, rather than an effort to influence the character or change the disposition of Deity.

Consistently, therefore, with these views, while it is impossible, without properly appreciating the supremacy of law, to estimate the nature of man, and his relationship to surrounding conditions, so is it equally impossible to properly estimate the supremacy of law, without, at the same time, appreciating that mysterious commingling of

thoughts and sentiments, now seeming heterogeneous, now seeming homogeneous, which make up the sum total of human nature; and which, from the dawn of philosophy, have more or less agitated every thoughtful mind. With the expansion of scientific knowledge, and the enlargement of that intellectual empire the inauguration of which now seems so propitious, we will most certainly witness a gradual displacement of old and erroneous superstitions by new and enlightened forms of thought; but, after all, the change can only be considered philosophically and scientifically perfect in so far as it bears on the science of man, and, therefore, on the science of life.

As an animal, man touches the earth, and is governed by the laws of physical nature. As a spiritual being, he rises into those higher regions which the immortal Plato loved so dearly to contemplate; and which, though not exempt from law, are, nevertheless, so adjusted as to admit the exercise of our noblest faculties, and our development, according to law, into a full and perfect manhood.

The supremacy of law means, therefore, a clearer and better appreciation of God and Nature; a more enlightened and more correct estimate of the conditions under which we live; it does not mean the immolation of our highest aspirations and our finest sentiments on the altar of materialism; it does not, and cannot, destroy the beauty of virtue; it does not, and cannot, deny that prayer, in its last analysis and highest conception, is a sublime necessity. As truly as there exists the law of gravitation in the material universe, so truly does there exist a law in human nature which impels us toward a higher ideal; an everlasting longing for something better,

which, though disappointed and crushed to-day beneath the petty cares and troubles of life, still rises to-morrow, more beautiful for its temporary suffering, more hopeful for its ultimate triumph in the future.

Surely this marvelous appreciation which enables us to enthrone the fair and beautiful form of virtue in our hearts, this ideal longing which fills the soul of poet and painter with the most glorious imagery, and this esthetic sense which enables us to appreciate the excellence of moral beauty, were not given us to be a mockery and a delusion. Not so, not so! With "Excelsior" as its motto, the human mind moves ever on. Systems will change, and creeds decay; but, in the midst of it all, there must always remain the solemn and important fact that man is the possessor of a psychical nature which no philosophy can consistently ignore, no merely materialistic science destroy. Nor does it invalidate this branch of the subject to argue that everything human seems so transitory and unreal. In a certain sense, it is perfectly true that, as we contemplate the great problem of human life, it does seem as if we exist but for a moment; a short flutter of joys and sorrows, and we are gone. Indeed, so evanescent do the phenomena appear, that we may at times be amply justified in exclaiming:

> "Between two worlds life hovers, like a star
> 'Twixt night and morn upon the horizon's verge.
> How little do we know that which we are!
> How less what we may be! The eternal surge
> Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
> Our bubbles: as the old burst, new emerge,
> Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
> Of empires heave but like some passing waves."

This, however, is but one view of the subject. In

another, and no less real sense, we are fully warranted in postulating the indestructibility of mind, and its accompanying probability that we shall realize in another world those beautiful dreams which we so often fail to realize in this. Indeed, the more thoroughly we know ourselves, the more clearly will we discover that in our best moments, as in our seasons of deepest depression, there is an instinctive longing in our nature for something better, purer, and more in consonance with the dictates of virtue and true nobility.

Philosophically considered, the very idea of personality necessitates this perpetual expansion and endless growth of our powers.

Standing on the "frontier-land between animal and angelic natures," we are necessarily governed to a great extent by physical conditions; but standing also on the same border-land, and directing our attention more especially to the psychical side of the subject, there is a profound significance in those suggestions of a purer existence, those glimpses of an undying spiritual peace and beauty, which come with a greater or lesser degree of vividness and frequency to us all—those sublime realizations of the true, the beautiful, the good, which must always remain unshaken amid the waves of tempestuous doctrines, because they are not only derived from the order of the universe, but are also founded in the very nature of man.

As Sir William Hamilton expresses it: "Once consciousness is ruined as an instrument, philosophy is extinct."

In view, therefore, of these facts, it will be easily seen that, although the idea of law is necessarily hostile to to many theories peculiar to an unscientific estimate of

man and the conditions by which he is surrounded, it does not consequently destroy or even mar the beauty of moral perfection; it does not, and cannot, deny the possibilities of human nature, by relegating to a hopeless obscurity the noblest instincts of our manhood.

Without law in the material world, there could be no order, no harmony, no regular succession of causes and effects.

In the world of mind, the principle is the same; the only important distinction being that, in all our estimates of psychical phenomena, we keep clearly before us the important fact that man's rational and discriminating powers, his moral sense, and his constant longing for an ideal life in which the conditions are purer, better, and more beautiful than in the present, are, in themselves, important elements in that orderly process of Divine government which we necessarily mean when we speak of the supremacy of Law.

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN PROGRESS.

PROMPTED by a habit of introspection somewhat similar to that which induced Plotinus to despise his body, and influenced, also, by that aspiration toward a better state which has been the dream of the greatest minds in all ages, it is still the sad experience of every thoughtful man that there is an antagonism between our higher and lower natures, which sorely perplexes us the very moment we attempt to examine into the nature of human destiny and the measure of human responsibility.

Indeed, that wonderful combination of opposing forces, which, at one time represents man as a highly rational being, endowded with the keenest and most exquisite spiritual susceptibilities; and at another represents him as the abject slave of those grosser appetites which, besides shutting out the music of the spheres, ends invariably in that deplorable wreck of human nature wherein, according to Milton:

> "The soul grows clotted by contagion,
> Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
> The divine property of her first being."

Certainly the condition represented by this latter class may well cause us many anxious and depressing

thoughts; while it also enforces the question, *Is it necessarily so, or does it proceed from some temporary defect in human nature?*

To some, the difference involved in the answer may be but slight; but really it is of very great importance—the foundation, in fact, of all our ideas respecting man's progressive capacities being largely dependent on our views respecting the existence of evil; and whether it be of permanent or transitory duration. In answering the question, so far as we can, let us, therefore, glance, in the first place, at those theories which have hitherto predominated; then passing on to the ideas on the subject as embodied in modern thought, determine whether it is better for us to believe that sin, as well as damnation, is the inheritance of the whole human race; or whether man's sinful condition is the result of a rudimentary condition, rather than the fulfillment of a curse. To assist us in our purpose, let the different authorities speak for themselves.

According to the doctrine as stated by the Westminister divines:

"The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation *sinned in him*, and fell with him in his first transgression.

"The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the *guilt of Adam's first* sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called orignal sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it."

According to another doctrine,* the subject reads thus:

* *Ratio Disciplinæ*, "*Confession of Faith.*"—Chap, VI.

"By this sin they (the first parents) and *we in them*, fell from the original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root, and, by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, *the guilt of their sin is imputed*, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

Every sin, *both original and actual*, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring *guilt* upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal."

According to the articles of the Church of England, the doctrine is thus defined:

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby, man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

Such is the theological estimate; and if repulsiveness were the only consideration, we need trouble ourselves no more about it. That it comprises, however, the sum total of all that can be said upon the subject, no one who thinks seriously and consistently can for a moment believe. Indeed, did the statement embodied in these creeds so far exhaust the problem as to leave no margin for speculation, well may we fall into a state of perpetual despondency; while the mightiest genius may appro-

priately make for itself a crown of thorns, the profoundest minds consider life but an abyss of woe, the serenest intelligence weep away its fondest dreams, and, with a long-drawn sigh, exclaim with Macbeth:

> "I 'gin to be a weary o' the sun,
> And wish the estate o' the world were now undone."

Sad, indeed, is the picture, and dismal the shadow which it throws over all our estimates of God and man. Can we, therefore, as rational beings, continue to endorse a theory so horrifying, so debasing? It is one of the issues of the age; and must in some form be answered.

To a contiuance of the theory it need hardly be said that modern thought is decidedly hostile. As an anomaly, in view of our enlightenment in other directions, is is perfectly true, as said by Strauss, in his last work, "The Old Faith and the New": "It is astonishing how a conception equally revolting to man's reason and sense of justice, a conception which transforms God from an object of adoration and affection into a hideous and detestable being, could at any time, however barbarous, have been found acceptable, or how the casuistries by which people strove to modify its harshness could ever have been listened to with common patience." Certainly there is, as has been already admitted, much to sadden and perplex us in our contemplation of human nature; but does it follow from this that the whole subject is necessarily embraced in that form of theological dyspepsia which, to say nothing of its absurdity in the light of the axiom that "no man can be guilty for what took place before he was born," leads us, also, unavoidably, to believe that "if our native propensities are themselves a sin, then the conclusion seems to be plain and inevitable that God

is the author of sin; not merely that he made beings who can commit sin, but that he has made beings a part of whose very nature, as it comes from his hand, is sin." †

Are we willing to accept the consequences involved in such a belief? Scarcely can we, unless so purblind as to be unable to realize its true character; while, on the other hand, as participants in the civilization of the nineteenth century, although we are compelled to acknowledge the existence of evil as a disease or imperfection in our nature, we cannot, at the same time, yield our assent to that doctrine of *original and inevitable sin*, which, although strong enough in the earlier ages of the Church to cause the anathematizing of Pelagius and his disciple Cœlestius, is, under the criticism and analysis of modern thought, falling gradually into disrepute among the most cultivated and intelligent minds.

In fact, if we carefully examine the subject, we will not be very long in discovering that the doctrine of total depravity, though still adhered to and persistently preached, commends itself to independent thinkers mainly on account of its character as a fossilized vestige of a former theologic world; still exercising an important influence, it is true, but, at the same time, destined, in view of the general expansion of culture, to become gradually powerless and obsolete. The fact of sin will still remain, but because our deepest reflections are opposed to a belief in the existence of a personal devil, and the indestructibility of evil which such a belief necessitates, we must, ultimately, pass over to a deeper faith in human nature, accompanied by a growing conviction that, although sin is undeniably a spiritual disease, it is not

† Professor STUART?

imposed upon us as a curse, nor is it exempt from the curative power of certain hygienic laws pertaining as truly to the moral universe as do our sanitary precautions to the domain of physical nature. In either case, the conditions are dependent, not on any arbitrary enactment of an angry Deity, but on the willful or ignorant violation of law. As the late Lord Palmerston, in his appreciation of this fact, replied to the Scotch clergy's request to set apart a season of general humiliation, fasting, and prayer, as a means of preventing the cholera: "Lord Palmerston would, therefore, suggest that the best course which the people of this country can pursue to deserve that the further progress of the cholera should be stayed will be to employ the interval that will elapse between the present time and the beginning of next spring in planning and executing measures by which those portions of their towns and cities which are inhabited by the poorest classes, and which, from the nature of things, must most need purification and improvement, may be freed from those causes and sources of contagion which, if allowed to remain, will infallibly breed pestilence, and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of an united but inactive nation."

Of course, the Scotch clergy, in accordance with their belief, took it for granted that the cholera was sent as a scourge by an angry Deity; but the inferiority of their conception, compared with that entertained by the English statesman, must be easily apparent to any one who thinks candidly and philosophically upon the subject.

In the language of an eminent writer: "This correspondence between the Scotch clergy and the English statesman is not to be regarded merely as a passing episode of light or temporary interest. On the contrary, it repre-

sents that terrible struggle between theology and science which, having begun in the persecution of science, and in the martyrdom of scientific men, has, in these later days, taken a happier turn, and is now manifestly destroying that old theological spirit which has brought so much misery and ruin upon the world. The ancient superstition, which was once universal, but is now slowly though surely dying away, represented the Deity as being constantly moved to anger, delighting in seeing his creatures abuse and mortify themselves, taking pleasure in their sacrifices and their austerities, and, notwithstanding all they could do, constantly inflicting on them the most grievous punishments, among which the different forms of pestilence were conspicuous. It is by science, and by science alone, that these horrible delusions are being dissipated. Events which were formerly deemed supernatural visitations, are now shown to depend upon natural causes, and to be amenable to natural remedies. Man can predict them, and man can deal with them. Being the inevitable result of their own antecedents, no room is left for the notion of their being special inflictions. This great change in our opinions is fatal to theology, but is serviceable to religion. For, by it, science, instead of being the enemy of religion, becomes its ally. Religion is to each individual according to the inward light with which he is endowed. In different characters, therefore, it assumes different forms, and can never be reduced to one common and arbitrary rule. Theology, on the other hand, claiming authority over all minds, and refusing to recognize their essential divergence, seeks to compel them to a single creed, and sets up one standard of absolute truth, by which it tests every one's opinions; presumptuously condemning those who disagree with that

standard. Such arrogant pretensions need means of support. Those means are threats, which, in ignorant times, are universally believed, and which, by causing fear, produce submission. Hence it is that the books of every theological system narrate acts of the grossest cruelty which, without the least hesitation, are ascribed to the direct interposition of God. Humane and gentle natures revolt at such cruelties, even while they try to believe them. It is the business of science to purify theology, by showing that there has been no cruelty, because there has been no interposition. Science ascribes to natural causes what theology ascribes to supernatural ones. According to this view, the calamities with which the world is afflicted are the result of the ignorance of man, and not of the interference of God. We must not, therefore, ascribe to him what is due to our own folly, or to our own vice. We must not calumniate an all-wise and all-merciful Being, by imputing to him those little passions which move ourselves, as if he were capable of rage, of jealousy, and of revenge; and as if he, with outstretched arm, were constantly employed in aggravating the sufferings of mankind, and making the miseries of the human race more poignant than they would otherwise be." ‡ Such is the attitude of the present age on the question whether pestilence and death are of natural or of supernatural origin; and, it is hardly necessary to say, that, with respect to the existence of a personal devil, whose business is to disseminate the seeds of spiritual disease and death, the tendency is in the same direction.

True, it may be urged, with some degree of plausibility, that, as there is in every mythology a Power some-

‡ BUCKLE'S "*History of Civilization in England.*"

what corresponding to our Prince of Darkness, so there must be some fundamental fact on which a belief so general is found to exist. But, even if we admit this, and accept it at its maximum value, it does no more than indicate that peculiar tendency in human nature according to which man, in all earlier stages, and sometimes in more advanced conditions, seeks to endow the different forms and qualities of life with the elements of personality —a sentiment, however, notwithstanding its universality in all rudimentary conditions, is, nevertheless, found always to diminish as we ascend the scale of civilization.

The impersonation of principles is necessarily the product of an early and uncultivated condition of thought; their abstraction and philosophical analysis the result of an advanced stage of intellectual culture. Should we pride ourselves on having attained the latter stage in our development, we must, therefore, confess one of two things: either that the belief in a personal Devil is an unmeaning and hollow pretense, the life of which has long since departed; or, if real, that it is, in view of our proposed enlightenment, an extraordinary phenomena, if not an inexplicable anomaly. § To say the least of it, its existence in the nineteenth century is a marvel. How long it will continue to exist, and exert its baneful influ-

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§ At this point it does not seem irrelevant also to call attention to the fact that the doctrine of "fallen angels," who, on account of the war in heaven, were "delivered into chains of darkness," rests after all, apparently on Apocryphal and not on Canonical authority.

It is true that the tests generally used for its support are found in Jude and Peter, but, as neither of these writers delivers the circumstances otherwise than as derived from another source, it is very convincing evidence that we have discovered the said source when we find in the book of Enoch (an Apocryphal work discovered in Abyssinia) a complete record or pretended history of the exact circumstances mentioned by Jude and Peter.

This subject is well treated by SCALIGER.

ence, must necessarily depend on the result of the coming contest between Reason and Superstition. Should victory perch upon the banner of the latter, it is needless to say that the manhood of the future will be branded with the stigma of a detestable slavery. Should victory rest upon the banner of the former, it is as needless to say that posterity will amply realize the truth of Cowper's remark:

> "'Tis liberty alone that gives the flow'r
> Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
> And we are weeds without it."

Or, again, with Southey:

> "Easier were it
> To hurl the rooted mountain from its base
> Than force the yoke of slavery upon men
> Determined to be free."

In passing these strictures upon the current theological estimate, it is, of course, to be expected that our motives will be assailed, and the tendency of the argument pronounced audacious as well as injurious. The moment we attempt to criticise anything that has become deeply imbedded in the popular consciousness, just so surely do we stir a hornet's nest, and, in the fullest possible measure, reap the reward of our interference. According, however, to the Latin maxim:

"*Magna est veritas et praevalebit.*"

With this assurance, we may safely enter the field, leaving the results to take care of themselves. Granted the fact of man's sinfulness, is it indispensable that we should preserve intact the idea of a personal tempter, or continue to regard, as a historical truth, the account of the fall? Scarcely will any enlightened mind

venture on so rash an assertion. Certainly there is, as we all know, something in the best of us which fetters us to earth, and, in some instances, comes upon us with the agonizing rush of a fearful temptation. Certainly, also, there is with all of us, in a greater or lesser degree, a power of introspection, and consciousness of the interdependence between the world within and the world without, which enables us to endorse the experience of St. Augustine: "I sought whence is evil, and sought in an evil way, and saw not the evil in my very search. I set before the sight of my spirit the whole creation, whatsoever we can see therein (as sea, earth, air, stars, trees, mortal creatures); yea, and whatever in it we do not see, as the firmament of heaven, all angels, moreover, and all the spiritual inhabitants thereof. But these very beings, as though they were bodies, did my fancy dispose in place, and I made one great mass of Thy creation, distinguished as to the kinds of bodies, some real, some what myself had feigned for spirits. And this mass I made huge, not as it was (which I could not know), but as I thought convenient, yet every way finite. But thee, O Lord! I imagined on every part environing and penetrating it, though every way infinite; as if there were a sea everywhere, and on every side, through unmeasured space—one only boundless sea—and it contained within it some sponge, huge, but bounded; that sponge must needs, in all its parts, be filled from that unmeasurable sea; so conceived I thy creation, itself finite, full of thee, the Infinite, and I said, behold God, and behold what God hath created; and God is good, yea, most mightily and incomparably better than all these; but yet he, the Good, created them good; and see how he environeth them, and

fulfills them. Where is evil, then, and whence, and how crept it in hither? What is its root, and what is its seed."§ Nor does this view, in any sense, indicate, an exaggerated or abnormal state of mind. On the contrary, so strongly is the condition here represented a reliable indication of a "*sana mens in corpore sano*," that we may safely define this keen realization of evil, and the many anomalies and contradictions it involves, as being strictly the result of a healthy state of our faculties, and at the same time a sure evidence of the clearness of our intellectual vision. As the matter stands, and as we are bound to accept it, man comes into the world possessed of certain imperfections, which very much diminish his usefulness, and impair his happiness. It is of no use, by any process of sophistry, to endeavor to change the true state of the case. There it is; and, whatever the cause may be, the effect still remains. In fact, as human nature is at present constituted, we are compelled, at almost every moment of our daily experience, to recognize the existence of those glaring inconsistencies, those lamentable failings, even in the best natures, which induced the remark, "If man was made in the image of God, he was also made in the image of the ape," and also to propound the startling question, "Thus standing on the frontier-land between animal and angelic natures, what wonder he should partake of both?"‖ To the modern thinker, therefore, as truly as to the most orthodox divine, the disastrous consequences caused by the existence of evil are clearly perceptible.

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§ "*Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*," by FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, Professor of Causuistry and Modern Philosophy in the University of Cambridge.

‖ HALLAM, Introduction to "*Literature of Europe*."

Here, however, the resemblance ceases; here we approach the point of divergence which separates the thought of the present from the thought of the past, in this respect. As has been already shown, the ideas of the past have been strictly of a *retrospective* character. As we will discover, as we proceed, the ideas of the present are essentially of a *prospective* character. Hitherto it has been the custom to regard man's earliest condition as one of innocence and happiness—that Golden Age when, according to Hesiod:

> "Men liv'd like gods, with minds devoid of care,
> Away from toil and misery; there was not
> Timid old-age, but aye in feet and hands
> Equally strong the banquet they enjoyed,
> From every ill remote. They died as if
> O'ercome with sleep, and all good things were theirs.
> The bounteous earth did of herself bring forth
> Fruit much and plenteous, and in quietness
> Their works midst the numerous blessings they pursued."

Such, according to the estimate of the past, was man's earliest condition; while, on the other hand, there is a decided disposition, on the part of modern thought, to regard the earliest stage of human existence as one of barbarism; possibly removed by an almost imperceptible gradation from the higher order of the Simia. Not the departed glory of a condition of primal innocence, leaving but the ruins and desolations of an ancient temple, where all was peace and beauty, but the suggestive outlines of a gradual growth; man, in one sense, touching the earth as an animal; in another, turning his back on the geologic ages, and looking toward a future of endless progress. In this connection, it is not, of course, to be denied, that the modern

theory can only hope to overcome, very gradually, the opposition which it has to expect from the dictates of popular consciousness, so strongly supported as the latter is by the creed of every religious denominatoin.

A word, therefore, to those, who in all such matters, refuse to be governed by anything but tradition, whether written or oral. Upon this subject, says one, who spent ten years in carefully collecting and arranging ethnological facts: "Traditions may be urged in support either of the progression theory, or of the degradation theory. These traditions may be partly true, and must be partly untrue; but whatever truth or untruth they may contain, there is such difficulty in separating man's recollection of what was, from his speculation as to what might have been, that ethnology seems not likely to gain much by attempts to judge of early stages of civilization, on a traditional basis. The problem is one which has occupied the philosophic mind, even in savage and barbaric life, and has been solved by speculation, asserted as facts, and by traditions which are, in a great measure, mere realized theories. The Chinese can show, with all due gravity, the records of their ancient dynasties, and tell us how, in old times, their ancestors dwelt in caves, clothed themselves in leaves, and ate raw flesh, till, under such and such rulers, they were taught to build huts, prepare skins for garments, and make fire. Lucretius can describe to us, in his famous lines, the large-boned, hardy, lawless, primeval race of man, living the roving life of the wild beasts, which he overcame with stones and heavy clubs, devouring berries and acorns, ignorant as yet of fire and agriculture, and the use of skins for clothing. From this state, the poet traces up the development of culture, beginning

outside, but ending inside, the range of human memory. To the same class belong those legends which, starting from an ancient savage stage, describe its elevation by divine civilizers: this which may be called the supernatural progression-theory, is exemplified in the familiar culture-traditions of Peru and Italy."* Of course, we expect to hear it said, in answer to this, that the scriptural record settles the question. But is this *really* so?

For argument sake, let us admit the genuiness of the Mosaic statement; and, even in the face of this, it does no more than render Adam at least a typical savage. As Sir John Lubbock remarks, in commenting on the position assumed by the Duke of Argyll respecting the primitive condition of man: "The Duke appears to consider that the first men, though deficient in knowledge of the mechanical arts, were morally and intellectually superior, or at least equal, to those of the present day; and it is remarkable that, supporting such a view, he should regard himself as a champion of orthodoxy. Adam is represented to us in Genesis, not only as naked, and subsequently clothed with leaves, but as unable to resist the most trivial temptation, and as entertaining very gross anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity. In fact, in all three characteristics—in his mode of life, in his moral condition, and in his intellectual conceptions—Adam was a typical savage."† Add to this the moral and intellectual defects contained in the Mosaic record, and the position of the Duke, as the champion

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* "*Primitive Culture*," by EDWARD B. TYLOR.

† "*Origin of Civilization and Primitive Condition of Man*," by Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Bart., M.P., F.R.S.

of orthodoxy, becomes even more inconsistent, even more indefensible.

Besides, to return to first principles, and endeavor, as far as we can, to enter into the notions which actuated the author of the scriptural account of the creation of man and his fall, it is evident, the more closely and carefully we scrutizine the subject, that his intention must have been to give expression to a mythical narrative, rather than a historical fact.

The form is necessarily that of an allegory, because this is just what would suggest itself to the mind during that state which we may not inappropriately describe as the dawn of reason; a position, which we are all the more fully warranted in assuming in view of that child-like simplicity which pervades the entire narrative. Then, as now, the contest between man's higher and lower natures was an extraordinary phenomenon, an exhaustless problem.

Standing, as it were, on the threshold of an infant world, and realizing, in the first movement of intellectual consciousness, that there is something strangely mixed in the constituents of human nature, we can enter into, and appreciate at once, the beauty and the adumbration of truth which this myth conveys. Here, however, we must be careful to guard against a very common error respecting that remarkable creature which enters so largely into, and which forms so important a feature in, the figurative record: in using the serpent as a simile, the writer, of course, meant to convey the principle of evil; but, in doing so, we must carefully discriminate between the idea which it really embodied and the significance attributed to it by commentators generally. In employing the symbol, the writer

evidently derived the suggestion from the peculiar characteristics of that remarkable creature, which, in addition to the marvels related of it in antiquity, was especially prevalent in the lands in which the scriptural account was composed. As it went hissing about on its belly, it was everywhere the mortal foe of man; and thus the symbolism would not only seem in accordance with dictates of nature, but also, under the circumstances, the best representation that could possibly be given. The notion, however, of its identity with Satan as the Prince of Darkness belongs to a later age—possibly some centuries later than Moses—and did not then originate with the Hebrews; having come to them from foreign sources: most probably, as Strauss suggests, "Having emigrated from the Zend religion into the Jewish."

Indeed, so strongly is this important point settled by the nature of the records themselves, that it requires very little observation to discover that the notion of Satan as the author of evil appears only in the later books, composed after the Jews had been brought in contact with Persian ideas and sentiments. ‡

Nor can it be denied that this later idea, in which the meaning of a simple allegory is so strangely converted into a theological dictum supporting the belief in a personal devil, is, in many respects, inferior to that earlier symbolism, in which the serpent is used simply

‡ In the words of M. Breal, "Satan assumes, in Zacharias and in the first book of Chronicles, the character of Ahriman, and appears as the author of evil. Still later he becomes the prince of the devils, the source of wicked thoughts, the enemy of the word of God. He tempts the Son of God; he enters into Judas for his ruin. The Apocalypse exhibits Satan with the physical attributes of Ahriman: he is called the dragon, the old Serpent, who fights against God and his angels. The Vedic myth, transformed and exaggerated in the Iranian books, finds its way through this channel into Christianity."

as the representative of our lower or sensual desires—a transition of thought which, it is also well to remember, has necessarily produced, in the order of its growth, that grotesque compound of elements which the Devil of the Middle Ages represents; and which, to some extent, still casts its dismal shadow over modern civilization. ‖

Under the influence, therefore, of this retrospective estimate, and the sense of degradation which it associates with man's nature and destiny, it is not to be wondered at that there should be no possibility of so far applying the Procrustean method as to reduce the proportions of modern thought to the dimensions of such a theory.

From whatever cause it may originate, and however much we way differ in our opinions as to its ultimate consequences, there is no denying the fact that the tendency of the present age is toward an enlarged mental horizon, a greater breadth of thought, and a higher estimate of the possibilities of human nature. *Apparently*, we are living in the same world as that inhabited by our ancestors; while, *really*, the difference is almost as great as that between Asiatic and European civilization. In the one, the conditions were mainly of a static character. In the other, the dynamic influence preponderates.

With our forefathers, the universe was, to all intents, "a seven-storied structure, in which the Hebrew and early Christian imagination found room for everything earthly, devilish, and Divine." With us—at least with

‖ For some interesting particulars respecting the characteristics which have at times been attributed to this Prince of Darkness, see Buckle's remarks on the Scotch theologians of the seventeeth century—*History of Civilization*. Also, the peculiar Monkish tale, "Celestinus and the Miller's Horse."—*Gesta Romanorum*.

those of us who belong to the progressionist school—"everything has turned out grander in the reality than in the perception: the heavens that open to the eye of a Herschel; the geologic time whose measures direct the calculations of a Lyell; the chain of living existence whose links are in the mind of a Hooker, Agassiz, or Darwin—infinitely transcend the universe of Psalmist's song and Apocalyptic vision." And as with the physical, so with the intellectual side of the subject. Proportionally as we enlarge our ideas of the material universe, we also enlarge our views of human nature, the measure of human capabilities, and the grandeur of that destiny for which, as members of the *genus homo*, we were intended.

Hitherto, it has been the custom to regard everything human, as being largely devilish, and under the penalty of a curse involved in an act of disobedience. Hencèforth, the indications are that our opinions will be framed according to a very different estimate.

"The human will," said Luther, "is like a beast of burden. If God mounts it, it wishes and goes as God wills; if Satan mounts it, it wishes and goes as Satan wills. Nor can it choose the rider it would prefer, or betake itself to him, but it is the riders who contend for its possession." Or, as St. Augustine expresses it in the case of a mother having two infants: "Each of these *is a lump of perdition*; neither has ever performed a moral act. The mother overlies one, and *it perishes, being unbaptized*; the other is baptized, and is saved."

But enough of this; accepting as a more agreeable subject of contemplation the brighter and the more encouraging picture suggested by modern thought. According to this view, although man is largely a

creature of anomalies, he is, nevertheless, so constituted that he needs but the healthy development of his faculties to insure his progress. In fact, that he is, in the strictest sense, a progressive animal, and not a degraded angel. § True, we do not escape, under this estimate, any more than we do under the degredation theory, from that dreadful mass of corruption which surrounds us on every side. In the one case, as in the other, we are met by the fearful results of ignorance, brutality, poverty, squalor, and intemperance; those distressing instances of moral shipwreck and spiritual barrenness which so sadly depress every thoughtful mind. But, in contradistinction to the retrospective theorist, the modern thinker, while he surveys this deplorable chaos, at the same time asks, Is it unphilosophical to believe that the God who spent ages in adapting the earth to those conditions requisite to human life may yet spend ages in adapting man for the final triumph of his higher over his lower natures? As Lord Dunraven forcibly expressed it, in his opening address to the Cambrian Archæological Association: "If we look back through the entire period of the past history of man, as exhibited in the result of archæological investigation, we can scarcely fail to perceive, that, the whole exhibits one grand scheme of progression, which, notwithstanding partial periods of decline, has for its end, the ever-increasing civilization of man, and the gradual development of his higher faculties, and, for its object, the continual manipulation of the design, the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of Almighty God." ‖

§ For a formidable array of facts in opposition to the degradation theory, see Sir JOHN LUBBOCK's "*Prehistoric Times.*"

‖ "*Origin of Civilization and Primitive Condition of Man,*" by Sir J. LUBBOCK, Bart.

Instead of reducing man to that deplorable condition, which represents him as subject to a curse imposed by an angry Deity, on the one hand, and liable to the endless machinations of the Devil, on the other; the disposition of modern thought is to regard sin as a negative rather than a positive condition: a state indicative of the absence of virtue, rather than a condition in which evil becomes the substratum of human nature. Persist in the old idea, and we place the noblest part of our nature under the pressure of an incubus, which, (to say the least of it), is far from conducive to a healthy anticipation of the future.

Accept the later estimate, even on the ground of a philosophical thesis, and we rise to a more consistent and more rational view of man's nature, the measure of his destiny, and the relationship he bears to those conditions by which he is surrounded. Indeed, even if we withhold our assent, on the point of actual superiority, we must admit, that the modern mind encourages a belief, which is wider in its scope, more sanguine in its expectations, and more comprehensive in its estimate, both of God and man. Evils, which a hundred years ago, were piously deemed especial visitations of Providence, are now resolved into their constituent elements, as products of natural law. The causes that have produced this change of sentiment, are of secondary importance. Enough for our present purpose that they exist; among its most prominent characteristics being that spirit of philosophical consistency which refuses to recognize the idea of a discordant universe, one half governed by God, and the other by the Devil.

In a limited sense, it may be true that the modern mind is compelled to acknowledge the force of St. Paul's

statement, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, in which he says: "We battle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers; with evil spirits that rule in the air." As a general statement, indicative of those alternations and evidences of frailty which every human being, more or less, realizes, no thoughtful man will reject the simile. But, to press the statement further, and insist on its literal acceptation, is to make a demand which modern thought will not assent to.

The specific difference between the ancient and modern theories consists in the fact that while the one adheres literally to the idea of an immensely powerful demonology as the cause of evil, the other relegates the whole subject of the Devil and his imps to that region of myth in which the human mind, in its earlier stages, delights to dwell; and which, as in the Persian mythology, embodied the idea of evil in the person of Ahriman, as the author of darkness, the creator of wild beasts, poisonous serpents, etc., and the cause of diseases, earthquakes and storms; the opposite idea of good being correspondingly expressed in the person of Ormuzd, as the creator of the sun, moon, and stars, and the cause of everything that contributes to man's happiness. In the one case, the sentiment is the result of the earlier and more rudimentary condition of Animism. In the other, it is indicative of that higher stage of intellectual culture which not only denotes a more advanced condition of civilization, but which, at the same time, refuses to believe that there is such a thing as intrinsic evil. In other words, while it recognizes the fact of man's imperfections and inconsistencies, it holds fondly and persistingly to the idea that evil is but an evanescent phenomenon, which time and experience will gradually

remove. Nor does it avail to argue that the testimony of history is opposed to this theory of gradual development, which regards nothing as thoroughly and essentially vile, and which, also, would apply the principle of continuity, and gradual growth, to the problem of human progress. That there do exist instances of retrogression, as well as of progression, in the records of history, is undeniable; but that these instances may be fitly compared with the periods of declination in the magnetic needle is equally obvious to any one who tests the subject by a comprehensive estimate. They indicate temporary variations, not permanent disturbances. In the long line of the past, nation after nation has taken up the beacon-light of civilization, leading others onward and upward until some defect has gradually produced ruin and decay.

> "Another day is added to the map
> Of buried ages."

We mourn over the monumental remains of civilizations long since passed away; we shudder at the possibility of Macaulay's New Zealander ever contemplating the ruins of St. Paul's; we are depressed at the the Sisyphean character of our civilization; and we wonder, in our sadness, why such things are permitted.

In our perplexity, we may be inclined to give up the problem in despair; but this is unmanly, unphilosophical. For a time, there may exist a transitional phase of darkness, but it cannot, in the nature of things, be permanent. Evidences which, at first sight, appear to contradict the idea of continuity and the perpetuity of progress as a component part of man's destiny, upon a closer examination are found to prove, rather than to disprove, the theory. It is for a time, and for a time

only, that the march of advancement seems to be arrested, and the hopes of humanity to be buried beneath the ruins of departed greatness and promise. In the revolution of ages, empires and dynasties have passed away, but the elements of good that they contained are indestructible—they are with us still.

For instance, who that studies carefully the characteristics of modern thought can be otherwise than impressed with the fact that, although the glory of Greece and the grandeur of Rome have long since departed, the present age is, in a very large measure, a reflection of their ideas and sentiments. The strict sense of Roman justice has given us our modern jurisprudence; * the spirit of Roman manliness, combined with the Saxon love of freedom, is, to a very great extent, the *terra firma* of our republican principles and institutions.

As for Greece, it would hardly seem necessary to dwell upon a fact which is, more or less, familiar to every school-boy; and which we all, in some measure, realize, either through the productions of her artists, her poets, or her philosophers. There is a charm in her name, a fascination in her literature, and a majestic grandeur in her intellectual stature which speak so forcibly for themselves as to scarcely require any additional emphasis. And yet there is a tribute, paid by Macaulay,

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* The vain titles of victories of Justinian are crumbled into dust, but the name of the legislator is inscribed on a fair and everlasting monument Under his reign, and by his care, the civil jurisprudence was digested in the immortal works of the Code, the Pandects, and the Institutes; the public reason of the Romans has been silently or studiously transfused into the domestic institutions of Europe, and the laws of Justinian still command the respect or obedience of independent nations.—GIBBON'S "*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*"

to the influence of the literature of Athens which we cannot refrain from quoting. It is so beautifully expressed, and, at the same time, so just, that it will, perhaps, in a fuller measure, enable us to appreciate the magnitude of the debt which we owe in this direction. Says he: "It is a subject on which I love to forget the accuracy of a judge, in the veneration of a worshiper, and the gratitude of a child. If we consider merely the subtlety of disquisition, the force of imagination, the perfect energy and eloquence of expression, which characterize the great works of Athenian genius, we must pronounce them intrinsically most valuable; but what shall we say when we reflect that from hence have sprung, directly or indirectly, all the noblest creations of the human intellect—that from hence were the vast accomplishments and the brilliant fancy of Cicero; the withering fire of Juvenal; the plastic imagination of Dante; the humor of Cervantes; the comprehension of Bacon; the wit of Butler; the supreme and universal excellence of Shakspeare? All the triumphs of truth and genius over prejudice and power, in every country and in every age, have been the triumphs of Athens. Wherever a few great minds have made a stand against violence and fraud, in the cause of liberty and reason, there has been her spirit in the midst of them—inspiring, encouraging, consoling; by the lonely lamp of Erasmus; by the restless bed of Pascal; in the tribune of Mirabeau; in the cell of Galileo; on the scaffold of Sydney. But who shall estimate her influence on private happiness? Who shall say how many thousands have been made wiser, happier, and better, by those pursuits in which she has taught mankind to engage? To how many the studies, which took their rise from her, have

been wealth in poverty, liberty in bondage, health in sickness, society in solitude? Her power is indeed manifested at the bar, in the senate, in the field of battle, in the schools of philosophy. But these are not her glory. Wherever literature consoles sorrow, or assuages pain, wherever it brings gladness to eyes which fail with wakefulness and tears, and ache for the dark house and the long sleep, there is exhibited, in its noblest form, the immortal influence of Athens. The dervise, in the Arabian tale, did not hesitate to abandon to his comrade the camels with their load of jewels and gold, while he retained the casket of that mysterious juice which enabled him to behold at one glance all the hidden riches of the universe. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that no external advantage is to be compared with that purification of the intellectual eye which gives us to contemplate the infinite wealth of the mental world, all the hoarded treasures of its primeval dynasties, all the shapeless ore of its yet unexplored mines. This is the gift of Athens to man. Her freedom and her power have, for more than twenty centuries, been annihilated; her people have degenerated into timid slaves, her language into a barbarous jargon; her temples have been given up to the successive depredations of Romans, Turks, and Scotchmen; but her intellectual empire is imperishable. And when those who have rivaled her greatness shall have shared her fate; when civilization and knowledge shall have fixed their abodes in distant continents; when the scepter shall have passed away from England; when, perhaps, travelers from distant regions shall, in vain, labor to decipher on some mouldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief—shall hear savage hymns chanted to

some misshapen idol over the ruined dome of our proudest temple, and shall see a naked fisherman wash his nets in the river of the ten thousand masts—her influence and her glory will still survive, fresh in eternal youth, exempt from mutability and decay, immortal as the intellectual principle from which they derived their origin and over which they exercise their control." So it is as regards the influences of the past upon the present; so it must also be as regards the influences of present upon the future. Through the principles of hereditary transmission, the qualities of one age contribute, in a very important sense, toward the formation of character in the next. In the realm of human activities, as is the case with physical nature, there is no condition of growth independent of antecedent circumstances.

Civilization is a process governed by natural and immutable laws, and not an introduction into fairy-land where everything can be determined by the influences of magical instrumentality. And just here we arrive at a phase in our subject in which we cannot too clearly realize that inexorable relationship between causes and their effects which determines the fate of nations as well as individuals.

It is written in indelible characters in all the records of departed civilizations; it stands to-day as the obvious danger of our present condition—a sad and solemn specter, which no thoughtful man can help seeing; and which, while it reminds us of the experience of the past, prophetically indicates our danger in the future.

By this, it is hardly necessary to state that we allude, in an especial sense, to that pernicious estimate which fails to discover the indestructibilty of sequence in the

moral universe—that purblind sentiment which settles into a sense of complacency and inanition, while our social, political, and moral atmosphere is daily becoming more and more contaminated through the detestable forms of vice and corruption which surround us on every side; and when even our sense of patriotism seems to have so far left us that we hand over the preservation of our liberties to base, unprincipled demagogues, while men of honor, purity, and culture, are kept in a hopeless and helpless minority.

Conceal it as we will, it is an undeniable fact that the moral tone of the country is at an ebb. Deceive ourselves as we will, it is, also, true that this decline cannot exist without producing the most disastrous consequences. Descending for a moment from the higher to the lower strata of society, can we suppose that our prisons would contain one half their present number of inhabitants if society was pervaded by a different moral atmosphere? Certainly not. Acting under a Pharisaic sense of superiority, accompanied by a willful blindness to facts as they are, we have been too apt to regard these unfortunate creatures as exceptional and unnatural productions of society; whereas, the truth is that they indicate a guilty society, quite as truly as they indicate guilty individuals. In other words, as it is impossible for any malaria to exist under healthy atmospheric conditions, so is it impossible for crime to exist, either in an endemic or epidemic form, without the presence of certain impurities in our moral atmosphere, operating as so many deleterious influences and causes of disease. It is not that our state-prisons and our penitentiaries are so many luxuries which we cannot afford to dispense with, so many museums in which the virtuous man may study the curiosities of

crime, and congratulate himself on the contrast. That this is a common opinion, arising from a combination of ignorance and egotism, may possibly be true; but that it is a sentiment diametrically opposed to the dictates of reason and reflection is equally apparent. Let us persist in holding to the idea which represents criminals as abnormal productions, and we are deceiving ourselves, and dealing unjustly with them. Let us, on the other hand, realize the important fact that they are, to a very great extent, the representative men of the nation, and we will very soon discover the measure of the responsibility which rests upon us. It is a mistake to suppose that we can remedy the evil by merely caging these unfortunates for a season, as if they were wild beasts, and then letting them loose on society again to re-enact their former lives, and reap the same results. In its way, punishment is well, it is a necessity; but until we have thoroughly realized that it has a remedial as well as a retributive aspect, we are sadly wanting in the most indispensable element of progress, viz., a proper appreciation of that immutability of sequence in the moral world to which we have before alluded, and which, in the most emphatic manner, proclaims the necessity of our elevating this seething mass of ignorance and corruption by which we are surrounded. By all means, let our laws express the greatest possible abhorrence of crime and uncleanness, the greatest possible veneration for purity of character and an unblemished integrity. Let them canonize virtue, and denounce vice. It is an indispensable part of our ethical culture that it should be so. But this is not all. As we examine into the subject, and endeavor as far as possible to separate the seeming from the real, we are met by the startling fact that there is something

radically wrong in our entire moral system; that much of the glitter of society, and almost all the usages of our businesss life, are but so many forms of shining putrescence; so many instances of moral decomposition and decay. The moral distemper which disgraces our places of public trust, no less than the seething mass of ignorance and pauperism which produce our burglars and murderers, is an excrescence which demands our immediate attention.

In view of our national resources and wonderful elasticity of character, the day of retribution may be indefinitely postponed; but that it must come, sooner or later, unless we can rid ourselves of these demoralizing influences, no sane man can for a moment doubt. With us, as with those civilizations that have preceded us, all real progress depends upon the quality of our principles; the quality of our principles, upon the character of our moral ideal.

And this brings us to the question of a complete and universal system of education as the most satisfactory foundation on which to build our hopes of the future. "We must educate our masters" is not only true in the sarcastic sense in which Mr. Lowe applied it to the growth of democracy in England: it is also true as a principle underlying the whole subject of political economy, and strictly pertaining to the philosophy of progress; a principle, also, which, if applicable to the British form of government, is especially applicable to this country, where a man's right to a voice in the government consists in the simple fact of his being an American citizen.

To some extent we have already realized the importance of this snbject, and in the erection of our public

schools made a very commendable effort toward its general application. But the trouble is we do not realize sufficiently that education is not a process of unnatural cramming—apparently adopted from the method of enlarging the liver of the Strasburg goose. Neither does it consist in that circumscribed theory which would lead us to suppose that education is a thing of schools and books merely, or even mainly. In their way, they are, of course, indispensable; but to draw the line here, and, in so doing, lose sight of the immense space which life and experience and personal thinking and feeling must necessarily fill in, is, indeed, to fall miserably short in our estimate.

There can, of course, be no education without some instruction, but there may be a great deal of instruction without education. Indeed, the Latan word *educo*, from which our English word education is derived, meaning, as it does, a *leading forth*, is in itself conclusive evidence that the best-educated man is not, strictly speaking, *he who knows most*, but *he who can do most*.

The extent and quality of our knowledge must always influence the character of our habits; but, after all, the highest wisdom, combined with the grandest aim of education, does not so much consist in *what we know*, as *what we are*.

This, it will be seen, necessarily brings us to the indispensability of an appropriate moral ideal as an influence coördinate with the development of our intellectual faculties. Owing to the intense bustle and activity of the present age, we know that it is especially difficult to obtain for this question of interdependence between our practical and ideal life the consideration which it merits. In this busy, money-making metropolis, more, perhaps,

than in any other part of the world, any attempt to analyze or enter into a subject so delicate in its nature is particularly beset with difficulties.

Unfortunately for us, we live in too great a hurry; we think in too great a hurry; and, therefore, have no time for these finer shadings of thought so indispensable to our culture and *real progress.* That this is the case, however, by no means denies the validity of the claim; it merely denotes a deficiency in our mode of life, which cannot be too soon remedied. The circumstances producing this state of unnatural excitement, and threatening us with a condition of turpitude, are, of course, to be regretted; but their existence does not, and cannot, set aside the fact that there can be no consistent estimate of progress which does not recognize those subtle but extremely potent influences derived from the ideal side of our civilization. Not that the conditions of human existence render the existence of such influences merely probable, but that they do more: they go beyond this, *and render them absolutely imperative and indispensable.*

It is a law of nature, and not a chimerical idea evolved from the culturist's imagination. It is a principle of human growth and development, and not a mere abstraction of philosophy.

It is demonstrated by that fact of observation through which we recognize that every man, in some sense, resembles the objective point toward which his desires tend; it marks the difference between the cultivated and the uncultivated man; it indicates the difference between those persons described by Professor Blackie, in his admirable essay on Self-culture, as "human lobsters," and those noble specimens of humanity, who, besides seizing upon the beautiful and good as their proper aliment, are,

also, always intent on performing some useful work, something that may help the cause of progress, and so lift humanity nearer to the realization of happiness, accompanied by a sense of its grand and noble destiny. It is especially illustrated in the elevating and purifying influences of Christianity; in connection with which, as another has truly said: "The great characteristic of Christianity, and the great moral proof of its divinity, is that it has been the main source of the moral development of Europe, and that it has discharged this office not so much by the inculcation of a system of ethics, however pure, as by the assimilating and attractive influence of a perfect ideal. The moral progress of mankind can never cease to be distinctively and intensely Christian as long as it consists of a gradual approximation to the character of the Christian founder. There is, indeed, nothing more wonderful in the history of the human race than the way in which that ideal has traversed the lapse of ages, acquiring new strength and beauty with each advance of civilization, and infusing its beneficent influence into every sphere of thought and action."‖ A beautiful tribute to Christianity certainly; but no more beautiful than true.

As such, may we, therefore, appreciate it; and in our application of the principle to our growth as a nation, and our responsibilities as individuals, endeavor as far as possible to estimate the true character of our ideal life, and the probable consequences resulting therefrom to ourselves and posterity. As has been shown at an earlier stage in this chapter, one of the most striking characteristics of modern thought consists in its repudia-

‖ "*History of Rationalism in Europe*," by W. E. H. Lecky, M. A.

tion of that theory which regards man as a worm, rather than a creature of grand and glorious possibilities; but this is not all; nor is it the most important consequence demanded by our transitional process of thought. As a means of changing our general estimate of God, Man and Nature, it is undeniably a move in the right direction; but the danger is that we stop here; forgetting that this change of sentiment is, after all, a germinal principle of thought, and not a positive force of action.

That we have gained much by the change which substitutes the progression theory for the degradation theory no candid mind will deny, but that the change is imperfect, except so far as it becomes a living reality, elevating our consciousness, and enlarging our view of human character, is equally apparent.

As long as the change represents merely an intellectual conception, its function is rather regulative than formative. In its combination with sentiment, however, it becomes an immensely potent influence, encouraging, sustaining, and impelling us ever onward in the contemplation of the beautiful and true; demanding, in fact, as the proper nourishment of our enlarging faculties, that exquisite adaptation of thought and feeling without which there can be no distinctly human development, no possibility of our rising to that grandeur and beauty of character which depends upon the united and harmonious action of an enlightened reason and a purified sentiment.

In dealing with this question of our ideal life, and the influence it exerts on the formation of individual and national character, it may be true, as Taine expresses it: "In regard to the Ideal, it is the heart which speaks; we then think of the vague and beautiful dream by which is expressed the deepest sentiment; we scarcely breathe it in

the lowest voice, with a kind of subdued enthusiasm; when we speak of it otherwise, it is in verse, in a canticle; we dwell on it reverently, with clasped hands, as if it concerned happiness, heaven, or love." Such is, undoubtedly, one aspect of the subject; and as such, it brings us into a condition in which we suspend, for the moment, the hard, dry facts of every-day life—a momentary insight into the finer susceptibilities of our nature.

> "The gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the poet's dream."

In addition to this, however, there is a philosophical side to be considered, a process of thought in which although the beauty of the poetical conception is not lost, it is for the moment superseded by that intellectual analysis which enables us to see as well as feel.

"The ideals we frame of life and happiness must involve a more or less positively ethical character. We cannot imagine what we are *to be*, and *to become*, in fortune and success, without proposing, more or less distinctly, what we *ought to be in character*, and to perform in action. Hence, in a certain sense, what a man aspires to become, has already *ethically* decided what he is. His aims and standard are the reflex of his wishes and his wills, as well as the assurance of what he can achieve in the future."*

It is so in the formation of individual character: it must, by the same rule, be so in the formation of national character. In carrying out this idea, it matters not whether we regard Religion as subsidiary to Culture, or Culture as subsidiary to Religion. In both instances, the

* "*Elements of Intellectual Science*," by NOAH PORTER, D.D., L.L.D., President of Yale College.

result is the same. In either case, we start with the conviction that there are certain conditions inhering in our nature which "the flesh-pots of Egypt" can never satisfy. In either case, the same need of human nature is assumed, viz., the indispensability of an ennobling ideal which shall elevate and enlarge our views of life, and which, in unveiling more and more the grandeur and perfection of moral beauty, will bring us nearer to the attainment of that noble humanity which we justly regard as constituting the crown and glory of the universe.

Glancing over the range of modern civilization, and enumerating the evidences of material prosperity and progress by which we are surrounded, is well; it is perfectly natural and proper that we should pride ourselves on our attainments in this direction. Looking around us, and observing the numerous instances of intellectual advancement which present themselves for our encouragement, is also well. The diffusion of knowledge, and the restless spirit of inquiry which follows necessarily as its consequence, are undeniable evidences that we are moving in the right direction. It is a glorious promise, and well may encourage us to hope for the future. In its last analysis, the power of the intellect is the mightiest power in the universe; it is the angel of light, removing the fetters of ignorance and superstition, and bidding the human mind to stand erect in its freedom. All this it does; but without an ennobling moral motive-power as its accompaniment it is incomplete. Man is neither all reason, nor all sentiment; but a combination made up of both. It is only in this sense, therefore, that we can consistently regard him. Exaggerate the one at the expense of the other, and the consequence is an abnor-

mal development. Combine them, and allow them to interpenetrate each other, and we produce a normal development, as well as a distinctly human being. In the moral world, as in the intellectual, there is a beauty which we cannot afford to dispense with. No matter whether we have attained to our present position through a process of evolution, or whether the more prevalent theory be correct. Tested in the light of consciousness and experience, it is obvious that we are possessed of certain capabilities which were never intended to rust in us unused. Indeed, the grandest and profoundest interpretation we can give to the doctrine of Evolution is when we apply its principles to the endless development and progress of spiritual ideas, as truly as to the consequences of its action in the world of matter.

In one sense, the moral side of our nature must be governed by the intellectual; but this by no means denies the necessity of their united action. The aim of true progress is the full and harmonious development of all our faculties; the bringing our entire nature, physical, moral, and intellectual, into the highest state of perfection, and the most exquisite harmony—that sweet accord so well portrayed by Tennyson:

> "Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell;
> That mind and soul, according well,
> May make one music as before.
>
> But vaster . . . . . "

Such, it seems to us, are the true conditions of progress. To estimate the subject merely by glittering superficialities is a fallacy. Before this continent was discovered, other nations made their estimate on these principles, and

they paid the penalty of their folly. They have gone down to their graves teaching us the important lesson that even in the proudest, and, to all appearances, even in the most flourishing civilizations, there may exist the causes of dissolution and decay. Again and again, the world has seemed to realize the idea of happiness; but as frequently has it eluded men's grasp, and passed away, remaining still an ideal rather than a real state. For instance, the Symposium of Plato is as a beautiful dream, in which Love and Philosophy join hands, and, in their union, seek for that sublimation of feeling which ends in the contemplation of the beautiful and good. So, also, the most pathetic and beautiful strains of Virgil are directed toward the attainment of that tranquility which gives such an imperishable charm to his poetry. So, also, Pindar, as he introduces us into the Fortunate Islands, paints with wonder ful vividness and exquisite beauty, the happiness of the blessed.† So, indeed, it has been in every instance in which the mind has risen above the petty cares and ills of life. From the pressure of circumstance, our daily routine may be more or less a groveling in the dust. Yet there are seasons when we may rise to the

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† "All, whose steadfast virtue thrice
Each side the grave unchanged hath stood,
Still unseduced, unstain'd with vice,
They by Jove's mysterious road
Pass to Saturn's realm of rest,
Happy isle that holds the blest;
Where sea-born breezes gently blow
O'er blooms of gold that round them glow,
Which Nature's boon from stream or strand,
Or goodly tree, profusely pours;
Whence pluck they many a fragrant band,
And braid their locks with never-fading flowers,"

"*Olympic Ode*," 2, *Antistrophe* 4.

sublime heights of contemplation, and, in our moments of tranquility, venture to look forward to a better and happier condition for humanity. To the poet, it comes with the rapid rush of intuition or inspiration. To the philosopher, it comes more slowly, but all the more powerfully, through the process of induction. To the commoner class of minds, it comes, perhaps, more nearly in the form of a vague dream, rather than as a rational expectation. Yet, different as the forms of manifestation may be, the idea has always existed, and in all probability will always exist. In fact, it is a condition of human consciousness, and we cannot escape from it. No matter if, in exceptional instances, as in the case of Strauss, ‡ the most severe thinking leads to that condition of helplessness which he so graphically depicts; it is evident that there must come a reaction, and the mind, instead of beholding the universe as a piece of mere mechanical Deism, will ultimately realize it as the expression of an Immanent and Living God. The moment we attempt to expand the idea of Law into that of Universal Necessity, and, in so doing, endeavor to suppress our higher and finer emotions, even though they cry out in agony, just so surely do we commit a scientific as well as a philosophical blunder.

The more carefully we examine ourselves as human beings possessed of a wonderful complexity of organs,

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‡ In the enormous machine of the universe, amid the incessant whirl and hiss of its jagged iron wheels, amid the deafening crash of its ponderous stamps and hammers, in the midst of this whole terrific commotion, man, a helpless and defenseless creature, finds himself placed, not secure for a moment that on an imprudent motion a wheel may not seize and rend him, or a hammer crush him to powder. This sense of abandonment is at first something awful. But, then, what avails it to have recourse to an illusion!—"*The Old Faith and the New.*"

and allied by our faculties to a supersensual existence, the more impossible it becomes for us to regard human nature as a mere automaton. It is only when we recognize the existence of a moral motive-power in man that we appreciate the true measure of human greatness. It is only when we recognize God *in* Nature that we appreciate the glory and beauty of the universe. Shall we witness the development of the oak from the acorn, and not believe that there may be a similar process taking place in the world of *human nature;* a transformation, which, however slow it may appear, will ultimately establish virtue on everlasting foundations, and wipe away all tears. Like the geologic changes that have taken place on the earth, it may require ages for its accomplishment; but that it will ultimately be realized no sane man can doubt. By all means, therefore, let us have faith in progress; it will aid us in mastering those difficult problems by which our individual, social and political life are beset. Besides, it is infinitely better to anticipate the Golden Age as a thing of the future than to mourn its loss as a thing of the past. The one indicates a season of manhood characterized by a spirit of bold inquiry and calm induction. The other denotes that period of old age and decay when the main business consists in re-affirming and verifying the conclusions of earlier years, and when there is an almost ungovernable disposition to regard everything new as false and dangerous. That this later condition is one diametrically opposed to the true order of development it needs but very little penetration to discover. That the former is more strictly in accordance with all known principles of growth is equally obvious.

And thus it is that in the existence of the progression theory there is so much which encourages and supports

us under the most perplexing of our trials. The coloring which theology has given to the current ideas in this respect can never satisfy the demands of an earnest and rational desire.

Instead of diminishing, it has rather increased, the gulf which has always more or less existed between Christianity and Philosophy. On the other hand, the aim of modern thought is obviously to produce a glorious synthesis between the two. And this brings us, in the next place, to an examination of that analogy between Neo-Platonism and Modern Thought which, it has been urged, constitutes itsprevailing characteristic and inferentially, its main defect.

Certainly there are points of extraordinary resemblance between the two ages, but there are also points of very great difference. For instance, although we must admit, "The decline of ancient faith without mature successor to take the vacant throne; the attempt of metaphysics to fit the soul with a religion; the pretensions of intuition and ecstasy; the sudden birth, from the very eggs, of a high-flown spiritualism, of mystagogues and mesmerists, as larvæ are born of butterflies; the growth of world-cities and world-science, with their public libraries and institutes, their botanic and zoölogic gardens, their cheap baths and open parks; the joint diffusion of taste and demoralization, of asceticism and intemperance; the increase of a proletary class amid the growing humanity of society and the laws; the frequency of frightful epidemics; the combination of gigantic enterprises and immense commerce, with decay at the heart of private life—afford, undoubtedly, a curious group of symptoms common to the Europe of that day and of this"—although all this must be admitted, there is yet an important difference which we

are equally bound to consider. To us it seems that the divergence between the two ages consists in this, viz.: whereas the Alexandrian school was founded on an unnatural confluence of Indian, Persian, Greek, and Egyptian thought, the spirit of the present age, although in many respects nearly as cosmopolitan, is nevertheless composed of elements possessing a much greater chemical affinity, and, therefore, much more likely to produce a satisfactory result. In the present age, as in the days of Neo-Platonism, there is a decided effort to erect a platform on which Religion and Philosophy may meet; but the conditions in favor of the present age are simply immense.

In its last analysis, Neo-Platonism can only be defined as a condition consequent on the negation of prior faiths, accompanied by the desire to harmonize, if not to blend, the philosophy of Plato with Christianity. As a period marking the progress of the human mind in its everlasting search after the Infinite, it certainly constitutes a highly important chapter in history. As Mr. Martineau expresses it: "It bears the mingled colors of an old world and a new; and is the twilight dream of thought between the sunny hours of Pagan life and the night-watches of Christian meditation." Beyond this, however, the application fails, and the analogy has no meaning for the present age. On a careful survey, and after we have tested the subject in its various phases, the disposition of modern thought will be found far more friendly to the development of whatever is best and purest in Christianity than may at first sight appear. Naturally enough, the age rebels against many absurdities and monstrosities that have been propagated under the sanction of theology; but independently of this, and the

many polemical disputes we may yet witness, there must always exist in the breast of every sensible man a profound respect for those principles of gentleness and purity which make up the essentiality of the Christian religion. In fact, no matter how vast may be the measure of our attainments, or how profound the method of our reasoning, we will always exhibit a dwarfed and imperfect humanity in the absence of those conditions of ethical and spiritual culture peculiar to the teaching of Christianity.

The Philosophy of Progress is only perfect in so far as it embraces and provides for our spiritual susceptibilities as truly as the demands of our intellectual nature. Thus equipped, we may reasonably expect that we shall learn more fully how to live, and, in learning this, learn also how to die; the realization indeed of that sweet tranquility when we shall find ourselves more fully in harmony with God and Nature, and when, as we approach the last and most important scene in our existence, we can properly appreciate the true meaning of life.

> "Or we can sit
> In serious calm beneath deciduous trees,
> And count the leaves scarce heavier than the air,
> Which leave the branch and tremble to the ground;
> Or out at midnight, in a gliding boat,
> Enjoy the waning moon, and moralize,
> And say that Death is but a mediator
> Between the lower and the loftier life."

Death has always been the great terror of the human race. It is not, however, impossible, as we grow wiser and better, and enter more understandingly into those processes of change through which nature perpetuates the principles of life, that we will learn to regard it in a new light,

realizing it as an introduction into a higher state of existence, instead of a cold and repulsive descent into the awful stillness of the grave. It is no figure of hyperbole to assert that a comprehensive theory of progress necessarily embraces the demands of our spiritual nature. The glorious theme of our immortality is one to which we cannot consistently assign an inferior position. Up to a certain point, it is, perhaps, possible, to construct a philosophy of progress without it; but, after all, we cannot deny that, in its absence the world loses half its beauty, and human life almost all its grandeur and significance. The absurd idea which associates our future existence with the resurrection of the material body must of necessity be relegated to its proper position as a relic of an earlier and more ignorant age; but *the fact of our immortality* will still remain. Science and enlightenment will demonstrate the impossibility of our re-assuming bodies which, after our death, become, through the ordinary processes of nature, component parts of other living organisms to whom they would be quite as valuable and indispensable in the event of a general resurrection as to ourselves. This, however, represents merely that unimportant branch of the subject in which theology has made itself ridiculous. Considered in another sense, and that the important one embraced in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, independently of any attempt to systematize the subject, we are bound to recognize the necessity for regarding the indestructibility of our nature as an indispensable feature in any theory which recognizes the possibility of man's development in accordance with the demands of his nature, and in keeping with that great and glorious design which has placed him in his present position; a little world within himself, accom-

panied by an unceasing demand for something wiser and better than that which is.

Such is man in his better moods, when he retires most fully within himself for contemplation. It is a feeling which ought to lead us earnestly and sincerely to impress the solemn lesson that man is only worthy of his race in so far as he realizes the meaning of his existence and the measure of his responsibilities. In fact, the more carefully and deeply we think the subject over, the more inclined will we be to cast ourselves on our bended knees, lost in wonder and admiration before that marvelous design which has made man as great as he is, and which yet promises to make him greater.

We have already emphasized the fact that the gradual progress of humanity constitutes the central principle in our creed. We would again say, in conclusion, that the more carefully we study man in connection with his conditions, past and present, the more fully are we convinced that the future will verify our predictions. It may be a long time in coming, but, just as surely as the sun rises, experience will demonstrate what philosophy anticipates, viz., that the human race, notwithstanding its many instances of individual retrogression, is still moving, as to its totality, toward the attainment of a higher and better life. Deny to us this possibility, and we destroy the meaning of those noble aspirations which characterize human nature under its best conditions, and which, if meant to be thwarted instead of realized, would lead us to believe in an uncertain and capricious Deity, rather than that infinitely perfect Being removed from all possibilities of contradiction and change, which modern thought so strongly insists upon as an indispensable condition in all attempts to

solve the enigma of life. As we look back toward the causes which have produced what we may term the orthodox idea of progress, we cannot consistently wonder at its character. Intensely dissatisfied with the moral evil by which they were surrounded, it was but natural that the great phophets and teachers of Judea should dwell most forcibly on the dark side of human character. This may be fitly called that age of the world when the terrible problems of suffering and guilt come most boldly to the surface. According to the same rule, it is not to be wondered at that Mediæval thinkers regarded the world as being so extremely rotten that its speedy destruction was inevitable, in the course of Divine vengeance.

To some extent, it was a noble ardor, a becoming protest against unrighteousness, but experience has shown how sadly it was mistaken. The condition of thought grew naturally enough from the circumstances of the age; it was possibly the best estimate that could be expected in view of all the facts, but the progress which the world has since made has abundantly demonstrated the futility of many of their most important theories.

And here, it seems to us, we may consistently rest our argument for a law of endless progress for the human race. Keeping in mind the different transitions of thought through which we have attained to our present intellectual status, and remembering, also, that, in view of our position in the long line of human history, we are better able than our ancestors to discover a symmetry and beauty in what to them appeared a chaos, it does not seem Utopian to reason from what has been to what may be, viz., that as humanity must

necessarily have made some progress before it could look back on a less perfect past, so it may, and probably will, continue to advance, each age bringing us higher and higher—in a never-ending career of wisdom and happiness. Of course, we are well aware that we are equally bound, in this connection, to remember that, as the course has been rugged and tortuous hitherto, it will probably so continue. It is of no use to endeavor to overlook this phase of the subject; it exists as one of the most evident facts of history and experience, and as such we are compelled to recognize it. On the other hand, however, we must carefully remember that as our idea of progress consists in a process of development, involving the gradual ascendancy of the nobler and better parts of our nature, it will be easily seen that there is, at least, a certain amount of trial and tortuousness necessary. The greatest growths are invariably the most gradual.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

HAVING endeavored, in the preceding chapters, to gain a partial insight into some of the leading characteristics of the age, we have now reached that stage in the treatment of our subject when we approach more nearly the verdict of an intelligent community. That we have fully accomplished our purpose we do not pretend to anticipate. That we have, however, partially done so, we venture modestly to hope. In these days, standing as we do at the close of a century which we may fairly consider without a parallel in the history of the world, and surrounded as we are by conditions which daily render civilization more complex, it would be the merest absurdity for any one to think that he could so far master the situation as to grasp the *whole truth*. In has never been in the power of man to attain such a magnificent result; and it is fair to suppose it never will be. No matter how severe may be the intellectual discipline, or how earnestly and thoughtfully we may dwell upon the mysteries of man and nature, it seems an inevitable law that the solution of one problem should always suggest the existence of another yet unexplained; an ever-receding horizon, in fact, growing always wider and more attractive as we approach what

seems, to our finite view, the limit of truth. The physical world, as we all know, is extremely grand and beautiful; but in the intellectual universe there is a far greater immensity and a higher order of beauty, as well as a deeper meaning and greater complexity in its phenomena. Standing, therefore, in the presence of a subject so vast and imposing as the intellectual aspect of the present age, it is hardly possible for even the most successful investigator to discover more than a few definite tendencies from which he may reasonably conjecture the probable character of the general result.

That our interpretation of modern thought rests mainly on the theory of a gradual education of the human race, we have already demonstrated.

That we may the more fully emphasize this, we would again urge the statement, that our present intellectual activity represents a healthy state, and not an unhealthy condition, in which reason, like a sick man's appetite, has becomed depraved. On the contrary, as before stated, the more clearly we realize the true impetus of scientific thought, and the more nearly we approach a strictly philosophical estimate of its tendencies, the more forcibly will we recognize the fact that its character is best expressed in Carlyle's abhorrence of falsehood and veneration of truth: "A lie should be trampled on and extinguished wherever found. I am for fumigating the atmosphere when I suspect that falsehood, like pestilence, breathes around me."

That there does exist *the possibility* of falsehood or error in the thoughts and ideas which have come down to us, we suppose no one will deny. That the *possibility* once granted, there should also exist a *probability* that modern thought may do *some good*, we think is equally obvious.

Indeed, the one may be said to follow the other as a legitimate sequence or necessary corollary; and, therefore, answers effectually all those who see in every new idea a likeness of the devil. The fact is, this sable personage is far more frequently served under the guise of bigotry * than under an enlightened condition of doubt and progressive thought. † It is true that the phenomenon of darkness in the physical world, which rendered possible the conception of a devil, has also its counterpart in the psychical or supra-sensible world in which we are called upon to fulfill the conditions of our intellectual existence. But what of this, since reason and experience both indicate that, although darkness has always been associated with everything human, and probably in some sense will always continue to be so, it nevertheless is susceptible of various degrees of modification arising from the measure of our intelligence. For example, if we compare ourselves with the earliest inhabitants of our globe, what is the result of the comparison? Simply this: man in his first condition shared the possession of

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* "He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of heaven
To serve the devil in."

POLLOK'S "*Course of Time.*"

† As an apt illustration of how far an unbridled superstition will sometimes go even under civilized conditions, the following incident, selected from Hallam's "Middle Ages," will convey a salutary lesson. The words of this eminent writer are: "In the tenth century an opinion prevailed everywhere that the end of the world was approaching. Many charters began with these words, 'As the world is now drawing to a close:' An army marching under the Emperor Otho I. was so terrified by an eclipse of the sun, which it conceived to announce this consummation, as to disperse hastily on all sides. As this notion was evidently founded on some confused theory of the millennium, it naturally died away when the seasons proceeded in the eleventh century with their usual regularity." Also see the many other forms of ignorance and superstition which, in this age, like so many dismal shadows left their impress on everything pertaining to man and the world.

the earth with the mammoth, the cave-bear, and the wooly-haired rhinoceros: man in his present condition has gained an almost absolute supremacy over the forces of nature. Having passed through a variety of experiences, and aided in his ascent by a gradual accumulation of knowledge, he has ceased to be a dweller in caves, and become the founder of magnificent cities; he has ceased to be a poor ignorant creature trembling with fear before every change in the aspect of nature, and become the calm and intelligent astronomer who can measure the heavens, predict the appearance of comets, and determine the density and distance of the planets; he has laid aside the rude jargon of uncultivated life for the refined and elevating strains of a Shakspeare, a Milton, and a Dante.

In short, having passed from the simple beginning of rudimentary knowledge to his present magnificent attainments, shall we be asked to believe that he has reached the maximum of his powers, and that the world is now about to stand still? Let us not be guilty of such a fallacy; for, as long as the human mind exists, there must always be an everlasting future, at every stage of which we may hear the encouraging words, "Come up higher." The eminence of thought on which we stand to-day is but the stepping stone to a higher one to-morrow. Indeed, if we ask ourselves seriously what this perpetual striving after a better future really means, will we not be forced to the conclusion that although man is, in some respects, the feeblest branch of nature, he is at the same time, in the strictest sense, the crown and glory of the universe? The most insignificant forces in nature will sometimes cause his death; but what of this, since

even in his dying moments he may, with the immortal Socrates, bid death welcome with a smile.‡

Besides, when we have once realized the peculiar beauty and attractiveness in this phase of the progression theory, we cannot regard the records of history otherwise than as an accumulation of evidence tending in this direction. The existence of an occasional hiatus is an appearance rather than a reality. The science of history has yet to be satisfactorily written; but when it is, it will undoubtedly remove many false impressions in this particular, while it will also reveal, in instances which we now deem almost if not entirely barren, a persistently progressive, although enigmatical, course in the direction and conduct of human affairs. Nor is there anything irrational or paradoxical in the idea which suggests the possibility of our understanding the past in proportion as we recede from it. The principle has been demonstrated again and again in the light of experience. In fact, it is one of the most obvious lessons of history that events which at the time of their occurrence seemed inevitably fraught with disaster have at a later period been regarded as so many links in the chain of human development. Is it impossible for the same rule to apply to modern thought? As we have before stated it is not a valid argument to urge the possibility of dangers which may

‡ Then holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now, when we saw him drinking, and saw, too, that he had finished the draught we could no longer forbear, and, in spite of myself, my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept over myself, for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a companion."

Such were the words of Phædo, the beloved disciple, as he related the death scene of this truly great man; and in their presence to-day, notwithstanding the lapse of ages, it is impossible for us to escape from the influences of that moral glow and inspiration which belong so especially to the son of Sophroniscus as the representative of all that is best and noblest in philosophy.

never arise. It is not the first time that this method has been applied; nor is it likely that in the present instance it will meet with any greater measure of success than its predecessors have done. Liberty of reason means the liberty of our manhood in its highest, widest, and noblest sense, and it is, therefore, an insult to our intelligence, and a hindrance to our advancement, to attempt to suppress or limit its action. Besides, even admitting that it is in some respects a terrible ordeal which compels us to witness, day after day, the interment of some long-established theory or venerable tradition, it is well for us to remember that we are simply repeating the history of man's past experience, while we are also fulfilliug those inexorable laws which render a process of constant intellectual activity synonymous with life; and which, under our present conditions, render it impossible for us to attain to that state of sweet serenity and calm repose:

> "Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
> Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
> Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
> Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
> Their sacred everlasting calm."§

As the world is at present constituted, such peace can never be ours; nor would it perhaps be well for us did we possess it. We begin with the faint lispings of an infantile intelligence; we learn by practice, trial, and perseverance, to ascend to those empyrean heights where wisdom sits enthroned in all her loveliness. As Max Müller has beautifully expressed it: "There is one kind of faith that revels in words; there is another that can hardly find utterance: the former is like riches that

§ TENNYSON'S "*Lucretius*."

come to us by inheritance; the latter is like the daily bread which each of us has to win in the sweat of his brow."‖ Is it possible, therefore, in view of these conditions, and especially so in view of the manifest superiority of the latter form of faith, that we can regard man's attribute of reason as a sort of Tantalus, rather than a blessing by means of which we may gradually ascend to the highest conditions of human wisdom and happiness? As we pass from one stage of thought to another, it is better for us to feel lost at times in a labyrinth of doubt and perplexity—nay, even to experience an occasional pang of despair—than to fossilize in that condition of intellectual torpor whose only consequences are ignorance, bigotry and superstition. Better "Let the dead bury their dead" than have the impetus of the age paralyzed by any mistaken estimate of approaching danger. At present the scientific voice is like one crying in the wilderness. Let us hope that the day is not far distant when it shall have entered every household, thereby fulfilling the scriptural prediction, "Behold I make all things new." In an important sense, man is the sublime Columbus of creation: *it is essentially his business to discover*, and, in doing so, to remove, whenever it may seem necessary, the accumulated dust of ages, as well as to displace the mists of error by the sunshine of intelligence. It may be true that, even in our best moments, and under our most sanguine views of human possibilities, we cannot hope to escape the experience of Gœthe's Faust, as he ponders the mystery of life. Like him, we may find ourselves ready to exclaim:

‖ "*Lecture on Missions*," delivered in Westminster Abbey, December, 1873.

> "I feel it, I have heap'd upon my brain
> The gather'd treasure of man's thought in vain.
> And when at length from studious toil I rest,
> No power, new-born, springs up within my breast,
> A hair's breadth is not added to my height,
> I am no nearer to the Infinite."

These temporary seasons of discouragement seem to be inseparable from our discipline. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the best and most intellectual natures are apt to experience them the most frequently and forcibly. They come from the ever-receding character of that horizon to which we have before alluded, and which we may strictly define, in spite of its seasons of momentary depression, as the great attractive power perpetually drawing us onward, without, however, the possibility of our ever reaching that state when, like Alexander, we may weep for more worlds to conquer. As we extend our views and venture on our voyage of discovery, we will necessarily leave the Pillars of Hercules behind us; but to suppose that in doing this we can ever reach that point when there shall be nothing beyond, is to indulge in a dream which can never be realized. Our position to-day is the result of a long line of antecedent conditions, all contributing in some way toward the formation of the present. Let us remember that the same rule applies to our relationship to the future. If, in view of our present opportunities, we are simply wasting our energies on the discussion of vain and fruitless dogmas, rather than concentrating our energies with a passionate devotion to the discovery of truth as it exists in the laws of Nature, and therefore inferentially as the revealed will of God, we are simply repeating the history of a darker age in which the noblest attributes

of man's nature were tyrannized over, and kept in an ignominious bondage, by the combined influences of an unhealthy asceticism and the most irrational superstition. From the disastrous consequences which mediævalism has entailed upon us, let us learn a lesson which we cannot consistently ignore; and in estimating the influences by which we are at present surrounded, let us remember, also, that it is only as we test them in the light of dispassionate judgement that we can reasonably expect to understand their tendencies, or to anticipate their consequences. The habit of thought, no matter how well-intentioned, which execrates the representatives of progressive thought the moment they invade, in their legitimate investigations, certain creeds which have slumbered undisturbed for ages, is necessarily a barrier to our progress and an enemy to our interests. It is of no avail to urge the unfitness of the world for the reception of advanced views. Were there not some deeply rooted and imperative necessity in the age which demands these views they would never have existed. They come to us not as exotic plants imported from another world, but as the natural outgrowth of certain conditions inhering in man's progressive nature, and at the same time inseparably connected with that law of change which is no less a law of life in the intellectual than in the material world. Lastly, as we lay aside the pen, we would offer one parting suggestion which may possibly assist in removing many of the misunderstandings and misapprehensions which now exist, viz.: if theologians would but examine calmly the history of the past, they would find much to convince them that although theology may sustain defeat, religion has invariably come brighter and purer from the contest.

The age of the world, as it widens into centuries upon centuries, tends more and more to confirm our belief in an all-wise and infinitely-perfect God; but in accomplishing this, it is absolutely indispensable that we should witness many changes in the form of our conceptions, laying aside always the lower for the higher.

It is an encouraging fact that the more deeply and carefully we study the tendencies of the present age, the less afraid are we of falling into a bottomless abyss. If we cannot avoid acting as mourners beside many a venerable creed or dogma, we may, at least, do so in the hope of that resurrection when Truth shall come forth brighter and more beautiful, because, in our weakness, we believed her dead. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickend, except it die," is true, not only when applied to the subject of man's immortality; it is also true in its application to those changes and alternations which are necessarily inseparable from intellectual growth. It is the business of a merely animal existence to sleep and feed. It is the privilege and glory of man that he may rise to Alpine heights of knowledge, higher and yet higher; at each ascent gaining a wider prospect of truth, and entering thereby into a clearer and better appreciation of the undying beauty of a virtuous life. According to Emerson:

> "Profounder, profounder
> Man's spirit must dive:
> To his aye-rolling orbit
> No goal will arrive.
> The heavens that now draw him
> With sweetness untold,
> Once found—for new heavens
> He spurneth the old."

Thought is alive, and therefore we cannot expect to find, in its movements a merely mechanical process.

Besides, it is a law of man's nature that he should instinctively recoil from intellectual stagnation as his deadliest enemy and the precussor of decomposition and decay. The greatness of an age is always commensurate with its intellectual freedom. The measure of our intellectual liberty must always be determined by our appreciation of reason. Nor need it be feared that there is, under the unlimited exercise of our rational faculties, any danger of ending in a hopeless negation of our finer feelings. It is not possible, as we have before said, for reason to annihilate sentiment.

It is possible, under every advance of thought, for man to discover a deeper beauty and a higher meaning in Nature, accompanied by a more vivid realization of Virtue as the indispensable ally of Wisdom.

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