

No. 7451.61





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PAMPHLETS.

(Theology.)

Vol. IV.

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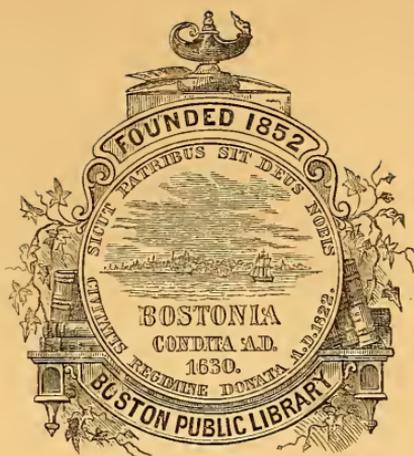
ADDED, Nov. 3, 1870.

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PAMPHLETS.

Essays & reviews,

By
Francis Bowen.

M. A. rev.

Jan. 1861

worthy guide; and the same remark will apply to his "View of the Middle Ages." His "Introduction to the Literature of Europe" has undoubtedly exerted much less influence than his other works, though few books are more frequently cited by writers on literary history, or can be read with greater advantage by all who are interested in tracing the intellectual progress of Europe.

ART. IX. — *Essays and Reviews*. [Contents: *The Education of the World*. By FREDERICK TEMPLE, D. D., Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, Head-Master of Rugby School. *Bunsen's Biblical Researches*. By ROWLAND WILLIAMS, D. D., Vice-Principal and Professor of Hebrew, St. David's College, Lampeter, Vicar of Broad Chalke, Wilts. *On the Study of the Evidences of Christianity*. By BADEN POWELL, M. A., F. R. S., Savilian Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford. *Séances Historiques de Genève*. *The National Church*. By HENRY BRISTOW WILSON, B. D., Vicar of Great Staughton, Hunts. *On the Mosaic Cosmogony*. By C. W. GOODWIN, M. A. *Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688–1750*. By MARK PATTISON, B. D. *On the Interpretation of Scripture*. By BENJAMIN JOWETT, M. A., Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford.] The Second Edition. London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand. 1860. 8vo., pp. 433.

THE publication of this volume is a strange and even a startling event. But it is strange and startling not so much from the nature of its contents, as from the character and position of its authors. Certainly there is nothing new or deserving of especial notice, either in a studied attack upon the authority and truthfulness of large portions of the Bible, or in a scornful depreciation of the evidences and a denial of many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, or in a bold and dogmatic assertion that any supernatural event whatever, and therefore any special and immediate revelation of

God to man, is, in the present state of science, essentially incredible, whatever may be the amount of apparent testimony in its favor. All this has been dinned into our ears so often that we have ceased to wonder, though not to grieve, at its repetition. And the argument has as little originality as the doctrine. There is little or nothing in the volume which is not already familiar to those who are acquainted with the writings of the English Deists of the last century, with the speculations of Hume and the later German metaphysicians, and with the doctrines of those physicists, belonging to the school of Comte, who have attempted to limit the study of nature to an observation of the laws of phenomena, rigidly excluding all inquiries into their efficient or final cause as unscientific and useless.

But if not entirely unprepared to see these sceptical arguments and sceptical conclusions repeated by clergymen, we did not expect their revival at the seat of orthodoxy by dignitaries of the English Church and officials of high standing in the University of Oxford. The title-page, with studied brevity and reticence, contains only these words, "Essays and Reviews," with the usual imprint by the publisher. We have supplied this lack of information by annexing the Table of Contents to the title as reprinted at the head of this article. Hence, or from other sources, we learn that, of the seven writers in the volume, two are Professors at Oxford, and three others are, or have recently been, Fellows and Tutors at that ancient University, one of them being a Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen and a successor of Dr. Arnold as Head-Master of Rugby School. A sixth, Dr. Williams, now Vice-Principal and Professor at St. David's College, was recently Fellow and Tutor of King's College at Cambridge. Of the seventh, Mr. Goodwin, we know nothing except that he is a graduate of Cambridge, and was recently a Fellow in one of its Colleges. All but one are clergymen, and most of them hold benefices in the English Church. A prefatory note contains the usual caution in the case of a joint publication, that the authors "are responsible for their respective articles only," and that they have written without concert or comparison. No one will desire to push the responsibility beyond the limit here in-

icated; but in this instance, as in the more famous one of the "Tracts for the Times," those who have joined in writing a series of articles upon the same general subject, to be published together as one work, must be presumed to harmonize with one another, in the main, in their opinions and purposes. This presumption is borne out by the contents of the several Essays when examined separately. Each has its peculiarities, but there is a general agreement among them in the purport and tendency of the doctrines which they teach. In short, the book must be regarded as the manifesto of a new school in philosophy and theology, which has sprung up chiefly at Oxford, though it finds adherents at Cambridge also, and which probably owes its origin to a reaction against the famous "Tracts," as it certainly rivals them in hardihood.

The first question which the reader of this volume will be apt to ask himself is, how its authors contrive to reconcile the opinions which they here avow and advocate with their allegiance to the Church of England, whose ministers they continue to be, whose Articles they have subscribed, and whose revenues they still share. We are not left in the dark upon this point. One of the Essayists, in an article upon the National Church, undertakes to answer the question, and his curious and elaborate casuistry respecting it we propose hereafter to examine. But we must first know what the opinions are, before we can pronounce upon the feasibility of the attempt to reconcile them with the standards of the Church of England.

We gladly admit, in the first place, that the tone of these Essays is unexceptionable in point of taste and decorum. The doctrines which they controvert are treated with decency and respect. Scoffs and jeers are left for those who relish such condiments of controversy, and who cannot respect the feelings, the honest prejudices it may be, of their opponents. At any rate, if the weapons of ridicule and sarcasm are ever wielded, they are directed where their use is legitimate,—not against the main opinions which are assailed, but against the weak or sophistical arguments, or what are supposed to be such; that have been adduced in their support. We find once in a while a gibe at the Evidences of Christianity, but never at

Christianity itself. This decorum we hope to imitate, by speaking with perfect freedom of the doctrines maintained in this volume, but with entire respect of its authors. Their conduct even in continuing to wear the robes and perform the functions of English clergymen demands to be treated with leniency; the attempt to play the casuist upon such a point is one that carries its own punishment along with it, and needs no sharp reproof from others.

One of the evils inseparable from the institution of the Christian ministry as a distinct profession, and from the course of studies which is the necessary intellectual preparation for it, is, that it sometimes leads the neophyte to sceptical opinions. Especially is this the case in England, where the Church, viewed in its relations to the state, in its hierarchy, its system of patronage, and its large endowments, is a great political institution, which maintains its Holy Orders to some extent as indelible, which consequently prohibits those who enter its service from casting any look behind them, but which is still bound to uphold at least the appearance of free thought and inquiry as one of the leading principles of Protestantism, and as a part of the inalienable birthright of Englishmen. It is a part of the original perversity, if not of human nature in general, at least of many sensitive and delicate minds, that they no sooner see the great doors close behind them which cut off all retreat, than they are immediately tempted to quarrel with the discipline and arrangements of their new home. Egress is still possible, it is true, but only at a sacrifice of immediate welfare and long-cherished purposes, from which they shrink even with greater dislike than from the obligatory performance of their newly imposed functions. The teachings of their new mother become distasteful just as soon as she claims authority over them, and a right to determine their opinions and dispose of their time. If an earnest and heartfelt attachment to the peculiar duties of their new position had always preceded the assumption of them, such mental revolt would be less frequent and less serious. But the Church offers a profession, a career in life, a subsistence, such as is offered by any of the other vocations to which educated men may turn; and thus men are tempted into it from a mixture of

motives, just as many enter into matrimony, with a hope that love will come at least after the indissoluble knot is tied. Of course, this hope is not always realized; and then they quarrel with the knot rather than with the spouse.

To minds of such a caste, and in such a state, the study of theology is apt to be rather injurious than beneficial. What they most need is a discipline of the heart and the affections, rather than of the intellect. The mind is in a morbid state of revolt against the new duties that have been laid upon it, and seeks occasion to question and controvert the authority that imposes them. Inquiry is begun with a bias in the wrong direction, with a predisposition rather to find or invent difficulties than to clear them away, and thus to justify the complaining and rebellious spirit in which the student commences his work. Too many enter upon a course of theological study in such a temper that scepticism is already with them a foregone conclusion. The inquiry is made to turn upon some of the dark questions of metaphysics, or the quibbles which may be raised against any point of history, whether sacred or profane, by those who will accept no proof but that of demonstration. The study of the Evidences is peevishly rejected, because the mind is really incapable of reasoning, and closed against conviction. The only effective medicine for such a perverted state of the intellect would be, to give up the study of theology altogether, or to postpone it till, by the practical exercises and duties of religion, the heart may be won back to the sacred profession, and the labor be resumed only when it has become a labor of love. To the theological student, far more frequently than to any other person, the question respecting any form of doctrine seems to concern its truth alone. He asks only, "Is it true?" Others ask, "Is it fitting, instructive, consolatory, or elevating? Does it harmonize with my conscience in re-proving me of sin, or does it aid me in striving after holiness?" He judges the doctrine by its antecedent evidence, as a matter of science; they try it by its results, as a matter of life and conduct. The worst result of the inquiry, in the former case, is scepticism; in the other, it is only neglect or indifference.

Of course, we do not mean that the systematic study of

theology is generally harmful, but only that it will do more harm than good to those who have previously quarrelled with their religious profession. However it may be accounted for, the fact itself hardly admits of question, that, in proportion to their respective numbers, there is more scepticism among the clergy than among the laity. Hence the ministrations of the Church do not effect half as much good as they would otherwise accomplish in the world at large. Affliction, anxiety, or remorse stirs and softens the religious affections, and begets a craving for sympathy, counsel, and support. The most important office of a Christian pastor is, to minister to minds in such a state. But what aid or consolation can he bring whose own faith has been previously shaken or perverted? How can he offer or counsel prayer, who does not believe in its efficacy, or thinks that its power is exhausted upon the mind of the utterer, and that it is not heard and answered in heaven? How can he urge resignation under calamity as a duty of submission to God, when he believes in the fatalistic succession of all events under physical laws, and consequently rejects, as essentially incredible, the doctrine of Divine interposition? How can he aid in robbing death of its terrors, who does not believe in immortality, except in some incomprehensible phase of the reunion of the finite with the infinite, or who maintains that eternity hereafter means only eternity here and now? Yet such are the cold and vague speculations which the clerical writers of this book would substitute for the vital doctrines of Christianity. Among the other criteria of theological opinions, why did they never think of applying this practical test,—How will my version of the dogma work as a means of elevating the faith and purifying the lives of the people of my own parish?

The first Essay in the volume, on “The Education of the World,” is one of those fanciful exercises of the intellect which consist rather in playing with a metaphor, or hunting a similitude to death, than in the sober and conscientious evolution of a truth. All those points in regard to which the parallel holds are brought into prominent and even exaggerated relief, while those on which it fails, generally more numerous, are either explained away to the perversion of the

truth, or are kept altogether out of sight. Such speculations are seldom more than half true, and half-truths, because more insidious, do greater harm than whole falsehoods. Dr. Temple begins by assuming, that, as each generation of men inherits the knowledge, and enters into possession of the works, of its predecessor, the whole human race is in fact "a colossal man, whose life reaches from the creation to the day of judgment." This is a very pretty idea to play with, and the fancy is ingeniously carried out with a careful selection of such facts of history, *and such only*, as can, with a little paring and shaping, be dovetailed into it. The successive generations of men "are days in this man's life"; the discoveries and inventions of all time "are his works"; the successive states of society "are his manners"; and, what is most important, "*the creeds and doctrines*, the opinions and principles of the successive ages, are his thoughts." Sometimes, the writer's eagerness to carry out the similitude tempts him to make rather hazardous assertions, as when he tells us that this hypothetical, aggregate man "grows in knowledge, in self-control, *in visible size, just as we do.*" We had supposed that the facts tended rather to support the popular belief, which the poets also share, that the generations of men degenerate in strength and stature. The Head-Master of Rugby School, of course, remembers the husbandman who, as Virgil predicts,—

"Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes,
Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris."

Modern Frenchmen appear remarkably puny when we read about the tall and athletic Gauls and Franks from whom they are descended; and soldiers of our own day, encased in the bulky and weighty armor worn by mediæval knights, would be about as efficient on the battle-field or the parade-ground as Goose Gibbie was when half smothered and blinded in the big helmet.

Following out the same train of fanciful speculation, we learn that each of the great races that have inhabited the earth had a distinct part to play in the education of the "monster-man" who acknowledges Dr. Temple as his Frankenstein. "Thus the Hebrews may be said to have disciplined the human conscience, Rome the human will, Greece the reason and

taste, Asia the spiritual imagination." Has Dr. Temple forgotten Egypt? or does he consider the invention of the art of writing a step of no importance in the education of his composite man? Greece certainly imported an alphabet, and the rudiments both of her art and her philosophy, from the East. No account is here taken of the Goths, and other barbaric races that issued from the hive of the populous North, though perhaps the character of the modern European owes more to them than to Greek art or Roman polity. A ripe scholar may be excused for forgetting or contemptuously passing over about three fourths of the human race, who are now, in almost every respect, precisely what they would have been if Greece and Italy had subsided, as the geologists say, into the Mediterranean three thousand years ago. China is a considerable nation, at least in point of numbers; while the Buddhists form no inconsiderable fraction of the colossal modern man. Even Africa must be taken into account, unless our author is one of those speculatists who maintain that a negro is not a man. As for the Hebrews disciplining the conscience of the nations farther East, one of the writers in this very volume maintains that the Jews were indebted to the Babylonians even for the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

But it would be a waste of time and labor to pick utterly to pieces a slight essay, which seems to have been prepared as an exercise of the fancy rather than of the intellect, if the author had not made it a vehicle for insinuating his grave opinions upon a theological subject of the highest importance. The only serious purpose which we can discover in this treatise is to teach the important fact — important, if true — that *the world has already outgrown Christianity*. As already stated, "the creeds and doctrines" of successive ages are represented as "the thoughts" of the monster-man, who "grows in knowledge and self-control," as he undergoes an education "precisely similar to ours." There are three stages in this training, corresponding to Childhood, Youth, and Maturity. In the first of these, we are subject to Law, — "to positive rules, which we cannot understand, but are bound implicitly to obey." This answers to the system of Moses, and was the education of the Hebrew race. Commands of grave and

trifling import are all mingled together, clear but peremptory in tone, regulating even the minutest particulars of food and dress. "But the reason for the minute commands is never given"; the people hear only the solemn announcement, "Thus saith the Lord." Other nations also had a training parallel to the Jewish, through their respective systems of natural religion. These "were all in reality *systems of Law*, given also by God, though not given by revelation," and afterwards so distorted as to lose nearly all trace of their divine origin. Such, in fact, is the necessary discipline of Childhood, whether of the individual or of the race.

Then Youth comes fiery and impetuous, breaking loose from all rules, and refusing to be guided except by Example. "He needs to see virtue in the concrete." "He repeats opinions without really understanding them"; and when seemingly most independent and defiant of external guidance, he is really only so much the more guided and formed by the example and sympathy of others. And such an Example for the guidance of humanity, *in its youth*, was set forth in the Gospel. "The second stage for the education of man was the presence of our Lord upon earth."

Fortunate was it for the world, according to Dr. Temple, that His coming was not delayed till now; "for the faculty of Faith has turned inwards, and cannot now accept any outer manifestations of the truth of God." The third period of history, the Manhood of the race, with its largely developed powers and responsibilities, has come. The age of maturity and reflection has begun. We cannot now accept, either Law from from the Old Testament, or an Example from the New. The spirit or conscience has assumed its dominion, and "as an accredited judge, invested with full powers, decides upon the past and legislates upon the future without appeal except to himself." "If we have lost that freshness of faith which would be the first to say to a poor carpenter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,' — *yet we possess, in the greater cultivation of our religious understanding, that which, perhaps, we ought not to be willing to give in exchange.*" The concluding sentence of the Essay contains the emphatic statement, that "we are now men, governed by principles, if

governed at all, and cannot rely any longer on the impulses of youth or the discipline of childhood."

Evidently this doctrine is only a modification of the Positive Philosophy of Comte, and was probably suggested by it. Comte teaches us, that there are three natural and necessary stages in the development both of the individual and of the race. In the earliest period, we attribute all movements and other phenomena to unseen personal agencies, that is, to deities; we are then theologians, and believe in the supernatural. Next comes the vigorous but lawless condition, when we substitute abstractions, or what are called "the forces of nature," in the place of imaginary deities existing beyond or above nature. This is the metaphysical stage, which confounds imaginary conceptions with realities, or substitutes names for things. At last, the mature age of positive science arrives, when, to say the truth, we believe in nothing, neither in deities nor in abstract forces, but accept the phenomena only, and content ourselves with describing and classifying them, all attempts to discover their causes being renounced as a hopeless undertaking. Dr. Temple's theory is a modified form of Positivism, and, we think, an improvement upon it. He carries forward theological belief from the first into the second stage, and even makes the religious discipline of youth more impressive and affecting than that of childhood. But the third period is equally destructive of faith in the supernatural on either theory. At this epoch, says Dr. Temple, borrowing almost exactly the language of Comte, man "learns not to attempt the solution of insoluble problems, and to have no opinion at all on many points of the deepest interest." External revelation, even if it could be believed in, would no longer have any binding power; the only law which we can accept is "a law which is not imposed upon us by another power, but by our own enlightened will."

An answer is hardly needed to sophistry so transparent. The law is first given in its simple or peremptory form, because, even if reasons were annexed, a child's intellect could not understand them. The subsequent development of the understanding, which leads to a recognition of the intrinsic beauty and righteousness of the precept, does not thereby

abrogate it, but only increases its obligation. The Gospel did not annul the law. Christ himself says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The Jews were first peremptorily commanded to abstain from idolatry, — reasons for this prohibition being unsuited to their understandings, and insufficient to break the force of their own early habits, and the example of surrounding nations. But certainly the obligation of this law did not cease when the Jews became enlightened enough to recognize the folly and wickedness of worshipping sticks and stones, and were thereby thoroughly weaned from the practice. Only to the Gentile converts (Acts xv. 19, 20) did the Apostles need to write "that they abstain from pollutions of idols"; and for them, as well as for the Hebrews, the spirit of the injunction was carried further, by commanding them to abstain even from meats offered to idols, and from "covetousness, which is idolatry." Here, as in other cases, the spirit of the law is not abrogated, but is made still more comprehensive, even when there is some relaxation of the outward form. Our Saviour did not repeal the Decalogue, but repeated it and forcibly summed up its spirit in two broad injunctions, rightly adding, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." It was only carrying out the same method to substitute prayer for sacrifice, giving alms to the poor for offering gifts in the temple, and observing the Lord's day in place of the Jewish Sabbath; for the same spirit of heartfelt adoration of the Giver of all good, and of self-denial and beneficence, lies at the bottom of all these commands.

Least of all does maturity of age and intellect supersede the necessity of an external revelation in the sense of rendering man independent of it, of doing away with its injunctions, or of substituting the promptings of his own heart and conscience for a message from on high. The sinless Example is still placed before us, not indeed in the flesh, but in the record of his life, death, and resurrection. If, as Dr. Temple thinks, we could not now recognize the Saviour's claims, even if he should appear again on the earth, and again, before our own eyes, waken a Lazarus out of his sleep, then we cannot acknowledge that he ever *did* come in the flesh, or that the grave, at his

bidding, ever gave up its dead. If that "greater cultivation of our religious understanding," which this Essayist would have us believe is of more worth than faith in the Son of God, has been the natural result of man's own efforts continued for centuries, then an external revelation was never needed, and we cannot believe that one has ever taken place. But if this cultivation, this refinement of our religious perceptions, has been brought about only by the study of the Gospel, and by the deeper insight into its meaning which the experience of many generations and the enlarged culture of modern times are competent to give, then this very improvement is a new proof of the Divinity of the Christian revelation, and the authenticity of its record.

But after all, even in Dr. Temple's own opinion, when he seriously reflects upon the matter, how large a portion of mankind, at the present day, have actually outgrown Christianity? Are missions to the heathen no longer needed, because even the heathen of our own time, standing upon the shoulders of all the generations that have preceded them, are so enlightened and refined in their notions of natural theology that the Gospel would be no boon to them? Even among the nations of Christendom, how many, both in understanding and in conduct, have already got beyond the Sermon on the Mount? Do even the English agricultural and manufacturing classes no longer need religious instruction, because they have at last become a perfect law unto themselves? We would not ask these questions by way of taunt, being well aware that Dr. Temple's answer to them would assuredly be the same as our own. But they may serve to open his eyes to the illusion, natural enough, perhaps, for a recluse student, but still gross, which makes one man fancy himself empowered to speak for all mankind, and to pronounce that the Gospel is obsolete for the whole race, because half a dozen scholars at Oxford and Cambridge think that *they* have outgrown Christianity.

The next Essayist, Dr. Williams, takes "Bunsen's Biblical Researches" for his theme, and thus shelters himself, in part, behind the authority of a great German scholar and diplomatist. He cautiously informs us in the outset, that "the sympathy which justifies respectful exposition need not imply entire

agreement." Perfect candor and frankness, however, would seem to require that the precise limits of agreement and dissent should be marked out by an expositor who eulogizes both the doctrine and the author that he expounds so warmly, that his enthusiasm cannot find strength of expression enough in sober prose, but breaks out finally into lofty verse. There is not much poetry in these two stanzas which are appended to Dr. Williams's article; but they indicate clearly enough what qualities of Bunsen's writings and opinions have excited the writer's special admiration.

" Bunsen, with voice, like sound of trumpet born,
 Conscious of strength, and confidently bold,
 Well feign the sons of Loyola the scorn
 Which from thy books would scare their startled fold —
 To thee our Earth disclosed her purple morn,
 And time his long-lost centuries unrolled;
 Far realms unveiled the mystery of their Tongue;
 Thou all their garlands on the Cross hast hung.

" My lips but ill could frame thy Lutheran speech,
 Nor suits thy Teuton vaunt our British pride —
 But ah! not dead my soul to giant reach,
 That envious Eld's vast interval defied;
And when those fables strange our hirelings teach,
I saw by genuine learning cast aside,
 Even like Linnaeus kneeling on the sod,
 For faith from falsehood severed, thank I God." — p. 93.

Every scholar will speak with entire respect of Bunsen's vast erudition, his indefatigable activity, and the earnest religious feeling, at times assuming the garb of pietistic mysticism, with which many of his writings are tinged. But a more rash and unsafe guide in any province of speculative inquiry which requires the exercise of sober judgment and vigorous common-sense, could hardly be found, even in Germany. He is a wild and fanciful theorist in archæology, philosophy, and theology, whose conclusions have ceased to startle and perplex only because sober inquirers are prepared for them beforehand, and pass them over with charitable indifference. His books are an infliction on human patience, both in their voluminousness, and the entire want of method, symmetry, and continuity in their contents. But they generally con-

tain a mine of valuable materials, which sober investigators can work to profit, and digest into system. Wherever great learning is not needed as the handmaid of reason, because the subject of inquiry lies not far off in the dim past, but comes home directly to the common understanding, Bunsen's opinions have no peculiar weight or claim to deference. As an expositor of the doctrines of Christianity, certainly, he is not likely to find many English or American disciples besides Dr. Williams.

It is admitted, in this Essay, that the "recognition of Christ as the *moral* Saviour of mankind," whereby is meant the development by him of "that religious idea which is the thought of the Eternal," may seem, to some, "Baron Bunsen's most obvious claim to the name of Christian." We are not accountable for the perspicuity of this remark; and the sagacious reader may already have cause to suspect, that the German diplomatist's cloudiness of thought will not be dissipated to any great extent by his English expositor's clearness of expression. But the general meaning of the admission seems to be, that many Christian doctrines, as expounded by Bunsen, will seem to common observers not to bear any distinct traces of their Christian origin. This we can well believe, when further informed that, "by Resurrection," Bunsen would mean "a spiritual quickening"; and that "the eternal is what belongs to God, as spirit, therefore the negation of things finite and unspiritual, whether world, or letter, or rite of blood." The hateful fires of Gehenna "may serve as images of distracted remorse"; and heaven is "not a place, so much as fulfilment of the love of God." Already the doctrine of another life and a final retribution beyond the grave seems to be pretty effectually refined and spiritualized away. But that no doubt may remain on the point, we are further informed that "both spiritual affection and metaphysical reasoning forbid us to confine revelations, like those of Christ, to the first half-century of our era"; and that the external evidences of the books of the New Testament are "sufficient to prove illustration in outward act of principles perpetually true, but not adequate to guarantee narratives inherently incredible, or precepts evidently wrong." Here is a lack of candor. Why does

not Dr. Williams distinctly inform us *what* narratives in the New Testament are “inherently incredible,” and *what* precepts are “evidently wrong”? Does he include among the former the narrative of miraculous events, even of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead? He has no word of censure when he quotes Bunsen’s passionate exclamation, “How long shall we bear this fiction of an external revelation!” though he admits “there will be some who think his language too vehement for good taste.” But then he will not quarrel “*on points of taste* with a man who, in our darkest perplexity, has reared again the banner of truth, and uttered thoughts which give courage to the weak and sight to the blind.”

Most instructive respecting the real purport of Bunsen’s philosophical and theological opinions is his version of the doctrine of the Trinity, which his English disciple sets forth and accepts seemingly without any suspicion of its true paternity. Here we must copy literally.

“His [Bunsen’s] doctrine of the Trinity ingeniously avoids building on texts which our Unitarian critics from Sir Isaac Newton to Gilbert Wakefield have impugned, but is a philosophical rendering of the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel. The profoundest analysis of our world leaves the law of thought as its ultimate basis and bond of coherence. This thought is consubstantial with the Being of the Eternal I AM. Being, becoming, and animating, — or substance, thinking, and conscious life, are expressions of a Triad; which may be also represented as will, wisdom, and love, — as light, radiance, and warmth, — as fountain, stream, and united flow, — as mind, thought, and consciousness, — as person, word, and life, — as Father, Son, and Spirit. In virtue of such identity of Thought with Being, the primitive Trinity represented neither three originant principles nor three transient phases, but three eternal subsistences in one Divine Mind. ‘The unity of God, as the eternal Father, is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity.’ But the divine Consciousness or Wisdom, consubstantial with the Eternal Will, becoming personal in the Son of Man, is the express image of the Father; and Jesus actually, but also mankind ideally, is the Son of God.” — pp. 88, 89.

“All this,” Dr. Williams confesses, “has a Sabellian, or almost a Brahmanical sound.” Brahmanical, indeed! Why it is pure and explicit Hegelianism, which our English Essayist

has been expounding and recommending, just as Molière's Bourgeois had all his life talked prose, without knowing it. He challenges his more orthodox brethren in the English Church to confute it "even on patristic grounds," adopting blindly Bunsen's rash assertion, that this doctrine, or something very like it, may be found in Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen; and he throws out the significant menace, "If our defenders of the faith would have men believe the doctrine of the Trinity, they had better not forbid metaphysics, nor even sneer at Realism." Dr. Williams is evidently not aware of the peculiar adroitness of interpretation, which enables a practised Hegelian to recognize the express form and likeness — the *vera effigies* — of his much loved doctrine *everywhere*, — not only in the Bible, the Fathers, and the decrees of Councils, but in every form of religion that has ever existed on earth, in every system of philosophy, and in every page of history. Only allow him his boasted postulates, that Thought and Being are identical; that whatever is Real is Rational and whatever is Rational is Real; and that the first principle of Logic and the fundamental law of human thought, which declares that two Contradictories exclude each other, is false, inasmuch as any two Contradictories actually coalesce and melt into one doctrine or being which includes them both; — only allow these modest demands, and he will point out Hegelianism everywhere that he chooses to look for it. In the passage which we have just cited, every one who has any tincture of the latest German philosophy of the Absolute will recognize at once the characteristics of the Hegelian logic and of the doctrine evolved from it. It will enable any Unitarian who pleases to become a Trinitarian without difficulty, so that he can repeat the most orthodox formulas, the Athanasian Creed itself, without stammering. A triad exists wherever two contradictories or opposites can be found; for the law of trichotomy, which is the law absolute, the law of laws, in the Hegelian logic, enables us to take up the two contradictory ideas, the thesis and antithesis, and melt them into one synthetical notion, which includes them both. Thus, pure Being, as wholly indeterminate or devoid of attributes, is identical with its opposite, Non-being or Nothing. But as

creation consists in nothing *becoming* something, the third member of the triad, which reduces the two other members to unity, is *becoming*, or determinate existence. Now, as Thought and Reality are identical, each being the law and essence of the other, any one who can *think* creation does thereby create, or becomes himself the Creator. Hegel's philosophy consists in finding everywhere unity under contradiction, and identity under difference.

The application of this system to the leading dogmas of theology, to the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement, may be easily made; but it leads to conclusions at once so monstrous and so shocking, that we prefer not to stain our pages with them. Their general character is darkly but sufficiently indicated in the citation just made from Dr. Williams's Essay; and a full development of the doctrine, as applied to all the forms of religion that have ever existed among mankind, may be found in Bunsen's latest work, "God in History," which has supplied the Essayist with all his materials. It is characteristic of this philosophy, that, whether used as a means of interpreting Buddhism, Greek polytheism, Hindoo or Scandinavian mythology, or Christianity, it leads to equally satisfactory results. A consistent and expert Hegelian may repeat any theological creed, and join in any religious rite. Differences of faith are of little moment when they are tried by a system of logic which was invented for the express purpose of reconciling contradictories. It is curious that Bunsen should have adopted the system just at the time when, even in Germany, it has become discredited and seems to be rapidly passing away. After enjoying an unprecedented success, after coloring every form of German speculation in philosophy and theology for more than a quarter of a century, a reaction has sprung up against it on its native soil, and appears to be now hurrying it into oblivion. On English ground it cannot hope to find many proselytes, though a few scholars like Dr. Williams may find in it the means of pacifying their scruples at repeating the formularies of the Church and continuing their implied assent to the Thirty-nine Articles.

Of the next Essay, on "the Study of the Evidences of Christianity," we must speak with the reserve which is ren-

dered becoming by the recent death of its author, the Rev. Baden Powell. It is in some measure a repetition and a defence of the doctrines avowed in a late independent publication, by the same writer, on "the Order of Nature." The discussion in this Essay turns, not upon the old question, *whether a revelation can be proved by miracles*, but upon the far deeper and more important one, *whether Christianity, regarded as a system of abstract religious doctrine, cannot be received on faith, even by those who deny both the fact and the possibility of any external revelation whatever.*

This is at once a clear and a candid statement of the real point at issue. *An external revelation is itself a miracle*, the greatest of all miracles. It is a break in the order of nature, an interruption of the ordinary sequence of physical events, made by the Creator and Governor of the universe for the express purpose of declaring His will to man in a more distinct utterance, and a more awful and impressive form, than would be possible if the ordinary succession of external phenomena remained unbroken. The miraculous attestation of Christ's mission upon earth, through the mighty works which he did, is one thing; the miraculous character of that mission itself, the immediately divine origin both of the message and of Him who bore it, is another. Those who, on the ground of the essential incredibility of any interruption of the laws of nature, deny the miracles that He wrought, are bound also to deny the miracle that He was. Even if Jesus of Nazareth had not been "approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know," yet his mere appearance upon earth, if he really possessed the character and authority which he claimed,—that is, if he was not an impostor,—was as great a miracle as if he had come in the clouds of heaven openly manifesting all the glory of the Father.

This is the real bearing and extent of the question as Professor Powell has distinctly stated it, and he has shown much courage and frankness in so doing, and in openly taking up his own position respecting it with all its consequences. One object of his present Essay seems to be, to defend himself against the charge of going further than other Rationalists, and thereby

giving up all that is peculiar to Christianity. His answer is, that he has not gone further, for the ground which he has taken is contained by irresistible implication in the arguments and doctrines which they have avowed without any special censure. He says, and we cite the passage as he has himself italicized it, that "a considerable school have been disposed to look to the intrinsic evidence *only*, and to accept the declarations of the Gospel *solely*, on the ground of their intrinsic evidence and *accordance* with our best and highest moral and religious convictions;" and he rightly affirms that the considerations thus adduced are "of a kind which affect the *entire primary conception* of 'a revelation' and its authority, and not merely any alleged *external* attestations of its truth." He also admits that "the idea of a *positive external Divine revelation* of some kind has formed the very basis of all HITHERTO received systems of Christian belief." He charges "the professed advocates of an external revelation and historical evidence" with inconsistency, for occasionally "making their appeal to conscience and feeling, and decrying the use of reason"; and he brings the same accusation of inconsistency against "the professed upholders of faith and internal conviction as the only sound basis of religion," because they nevertheless regard "the external facts as not less essential truth which it would be profane to question." His own doctrine is, that the essence of a religion is "the disclosure of *spiritual* truth, as such," which must be received, if at all, on faith, and not on evidence.

"All reason and science conspire to the confession, that beyond the domain of physical causation and the possible conceptions of *intellect* or *knowledge*, there lies open the boundless region of spiritual things, which is the sole dominion of *faith*. And while intellect and philosophy are compelled to disown the recognition of anything in the world of matter at variance with the first principle of the laws of matter, — the universal order and indissoluble unity of physical causes, — they are the more ready to admit the higher claims of divine mysteries in the invisible and spiritual world. Advancing knowledge, while it asserts the dominion of science in physical things, confirms that of faith in spiritual; we thus neither impugn the generalizations of philosophy, nor allow them to invade the dominion of faith, and admit that what is not a subject for a problem may hold its place in a creed." — p. 127.

On this theory, evidently, the whole narrative of our Saviour's life must be rewritten, and even the scheme of Christian doctrine, so far as it relates to his peculiar nature and office, must be abandoned. The story of his miraculous birth is a fable; the mighty works that he did are incredible myths, and the sepulchre in which he was laid never gave up its dead, unless, indeed, his disciples came by night and stole him away. The purely abstract and spiritual portion of the doctrine that he preached, apart from his assurances of a resurrection and a judgment to come, which are facts that no observation of the present laws of nature can warrant, must be received as true on the same grounds, and to the same extent, that we accept the teachings of Socrates; namely, their accordance with our moral and religious instincts. We are not even at liberty so far to extend the domain of faith as to include the facts *on account of* the doctrine, though *not as evidence* for the doctrine; that is, the creed must not embrace the resurrection, or any other miraculous occurrence, even though not relying upon it as an attestation of purely spiritual truth. For it is expressly taught, that "matters of clear and positive fact, investigated on critical grounds and supported by exact evidence, are properly matters of knowledge, not of faith."

There is nothing new in the argument of the Essayist against the possibility of an external revelation or any other miraculous occurrence, though great stress is laid by him upon the additional illustrations, which the recent progress of science has afforded, of the immutability and universality of physical laws; as if the advancement of science tended to place the old argument in a new and stronger light. Testimony, it is urged, is competent at the utmost to establish only the reality of the external phenomenon as it appears to the senses; but however unusual or startling it may so appear, the physicist declares with perfect confidence, that it is due to the operation of some natural law as yet undiscovered, or of some previously well-known principle, the action of which in this particular case is so far modified by an unusual combination of circumstances, or by the co-operation of other principles, that the normal working of the law cannot easily be recognized and explained. Still he pronounces without hesitation that it

is not supernatural, but strictly natural, even though all attempts to fathom its physical cause have hitherto failed; and he would adhere to this position, though these attempts should never be crowned with success. The strength of this conviction rests on the recent great success of modern science in reducing phenomena hitherto held to be anomalous to the regular action of law.

All this is very true, but it is nothing to the purpose, except so far, indeed, as it contains an important admission which strengthens the position of the supernaturalist. It is herein admitted by implication, that we are not to deny the truth of the narrative, if supported by competent testimony, however startling the facts; but we must only seek an explanation of the facts by reducing them to the ordinary operation of law, and be sure that such an explanation is possible, even if we do not succeed in finding it out. Thus enunciated, the doctrine is only a revival of the theory of Paulus, one of the earlier German Rationalists, that the facts are truly recorded by the Evangelists, but that they were only seeming miracles, or natural occurrences in disguise. This theory is generally abandoned, even in Germany, on account of the absurdities into which its advocates were betrayed in attempting to reduce the miracles of the Gospel to ordinary events.

But the great error of the Essayist results from the hopeless confusion of his ideas in respect to the true nature of physical causation. Sometimes, he seems to adopt the doctrine of the Positivists, that such causation is nothing but the uniformity of sequence which enables us to predict occurrences, but not to explain them, the very idea of efficient cause being, in their philosophy, a figment of bad metaphysics. Of course, he who denies efficient agency of any sort, must also deny supernatural agency; but he does so at the expense of rejecting an original and irresistible law of the human mind, which declares that every change or beginning of existence *must* have an efficient cause, whether we can discover it or not. Then, again, the Essayist, unable to prove from mere induction the necessary and axiomatic truth, that no physical change whatever can take place "unless through the invariable operation of a series of eternally impressed consequences,

following in some necessary chain of orderly connection," appears to attribute necessary and efficient causation to matter, and to deny voluntary causation to mind. He admits that "we continually behold lower laws held in restraint by higher, — mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital"; but he demurs to the third instance, because he "must remark in passing, that the meaning of 'moral laws controlling physical' is not very clear." Why not? Is not the conscious voluntary exertion, whereby I raise my arm, and thus support a weight that would otherwise fall, an indubitable case of moral and conscious force controlling or overriding, in a particular instance, the action of gravitation? And is not the whole history of physical science one long record of the triumphs of moral and intelligent force over physical law, which is everywhere so bent, guided, and overruled by intelligence, that it seems not so much man's master as his slave? Certainly, in this respect, as in so many others, man is made in the likeness of his Creator; as Lord Bacon truly says, "*etiam inventa quasi novæ creationes sunt, et divinorum operum imitamenta.*" If the Essayist believes in a personal God, — and otherwise we have no argument with him, for we admit the atheist's perfect right to say that, to him, a miracle is a thing absolutely incredible, — then he must acknowledge that the action of divine agency in suspending a law of nature is just as comprehensible and credible as that of human agency accomplishing a precisely similar result on a smaller scale. Slowly, after much study and effort, and often indirectly, man performs that which infinite power and wisdom does at once. Does the length or difficulty of the operation alter its essential nature? The surgeon puts again into their proper shape and position the pieces of a bone which the relentless law of gravitation has crushed; and if it be argued that *he* cannot cause the fragments to reunite, what is this but saying, that man performs a very small part of the cure, and a compassionate God does the rest? Suppose that never since the world began, save in one solitary instance, did the broken pieces of a bone thus reunite. Then this single instance would be a miracle, — a violation of a fixed law of nature, — and the Essayist would refuse to believe it on any testimony, just as he now refuses to believe

that Lazarus was raised from the dead. • But he believes without difficulty, and on very slight testimony, that this phenomenon of a fractured bone being reunited has occurred more times than he can reckon. Yet what sort of logic is that, which pronounces it absolutely incredible that the thing should happen for the first time only, but perfectly credible that it should take place again and again till it has ceased to be a wonder? The fact is, our author's whole argument against miracles, founded on the absolute immutability of physical law, amounts only to this poor truism, that such a law is never suspended without an adequate cause. Nobody asserts the contrary. He who believes in a miracle believes that God suspended it.

The fourth Essay, on the National Church, by the Rev. Henry B. Wilson, is chiefly curious as indicating the views of these writers as to the possibility and rightfulness of sceptics continuing to act as Christian clergymen, and, as such, to hold their benefices and other allotted portions of Church income, to officiate at the Sacraments, to repeat weekly, if not daily, the Service for the day, with either the Apostles', the Nicene, or the Athanasian Creed, together with the Lessons from the Old and New Testaments, and to perform all other clerical functions. The general tone of the Essay and the nature of the topics considered in it strikingly illustrate the truth of our introductory remarks upon the frame of mind and temper in which a clergyman finds himself, who has actually quarrelled with his profession and ceased to believe the doctrines that he is bound to teach, but who cannot summon up decision and fortitude enough to resign his office and look elsewhere for occupation and support. The writer adopts a querulous tone, and appears discontented with himself. The Essay is a sort of involuntary confession, a record of the anxious and bitter self-communings that grow out of a false position and a wide discrepancy between opinion and profession. Mr. Wilson evidently does not intend to attack Christianity, but only to justify himself. Unhappily, a necessary part of his own justification is to show that he has some good reason for quarrelling with his religion, and that it is a veritable grievance to be obliged to repeat the formularies of faith. Accordingly, he

does not actually argue against Christianity, but complains of it, frets about it, strives to pick flaws in it, and treats it as pettishly as a child does a lesson which only fear of the rod induces him to study.

Thus, many evils in all ages, he tells us, — and the information is not very new, — have been linked with the Christian profession, such as religious wars, delusions, and spiritual tyrannies; and “many goods of civilization in our own day have apparently not the remotest connection with the Gospel.” He complains that forty-two per cent of the English people, as was found by actual count, “neglected to attend means of public worship within their reach on the census Sunday in 1851.” Scepticism is not radicalism now, Mr. Wilson says, whatever it may have been half a century ago, but is “the result of observation and thought, not of passion.” Our knowledge of the nations of the earth has been increased, and we have become acquainted with great empires, “Pagan or even atheistic.”

“We are told that to know and believe in Jesus Christ is in some sense necessary to salvation. It has not been given to these. Are they, will they be hereafter, the worse off for their ignorance? As to abstruse points of doctrine concerning the Divine Nature itself, those subjects may be thought to lie beyond the range of our faculties; if one says aye no other is entitled to say no to his aye.” — p. 153.

“If we would set many unquiet souls at rest,” we are bound to explain “the unequal distribution of the Divine benefits.” Christianity did not overspread the world very rapidly, after all; it has never been professed by “more than a fourth part of the people of the earth.” Among Christian converts, even in the Apostolic age, there were those who had no belief in the resurrection from the dead, and St. Paul argues with such elaborately, “without expelling them from the church”; though, we will remind Mr. Wilson, in passing, that there is no evidence, and it is not very probable, that he allowed them to be ministers, bishops, or presbyters. “There were current in the primitive Church very distinct Christologies”; and we can neither attribute to any defect in our capacities, nor to any imperfect spiritual endowments of the

writers, "the difficulty, if not impossibility, of reconciling the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke, or the chronology of the Holy Week, or the accounts of the Resurrection."

Argument would be thrown away upon a fretful man, who is merely bent upon justifying his pettishness to himself. Otherwise, we might remind Mr. Wilson, that Christianity cannot fairly be held responsible for the faults of Christians which it has failed to cure, since it did not undertake to deprive man of the freedom of his will; that it may have been of inestimable benefit to the world, even if it has not been accepted by all barbarous and uncivilized tribes; that even the worst men at times feel its influence, and acknowledge its power to comfort and to save; that surely the best elements of modern civilization are inseparably intertwined with it, and would perish without its support; and that some difficulties in the interpretation of the record are the necessary result of its transmission through eighteen centuries to nations of widely different habits and modes of thought, without a continued miracle being wrought in order to adapt its expressions to ever-changing circumstances. The truth and purity of the revelation is one thing, and the perfectness of the record of it, after a lapse of one or two thousand years, or even in the Apostolic age, is another. If the benefits conferred upon the world by Christianity had stopped at any point short of turning this earth into heaven, and men into gods, whining complaints would still be possible because it had not accomplished *more*. The question is not, whether the religion has done all the good that is conceivable, but whether the good which it has actually done is so great that we have full cause to thank God for revealing it to man.

The main purpose of Mr. Wilson's Essay is to present the arguments for converting the present Established Church into a truly "National Church," whereby he means one so broad that it would literally contain *all* the people, of whatever shades of belief or unbelief, those who deny the resurrection, the revelation, or even the being of a God, included. "A National Church," he says, with startling frankness, "*need not, historically speaking, be Christian, nor, if it be Christian, need it be tied down to particular forms which have been prevalent*

at certain times in Christendom." All that is essential is, "that it should undertake to assist the spiritual progress of the nation." And the latitude which he would concede to the laity, he boldly demands for the clergy. "The freedom of opinion," he says, "which belongs to the English citizen, should be conceded to the English Churchman; and the freedom which is already practically enjoyed by the members of the congregation, cannot without injustice be denied to its ministers."

The Essayist adopts entirely Coleridge's theory respecting the endowment of the Established Church, which endowment he calls the Nationalty, because it is the property of the nation at large, and, as such, does not descend by inheritance or testament. "The enjoyment of it is subject to the performance of special services, and is attainable only by the possession of certain qualifications." The privilege of participating in it should be free from all unnecessary restraint, so that the Clerisy may be kept up and recruited from the whole body of the citizens. Though the Nationalty at first was undoubtedly a foundation only for pious uses, as it originated in gifts and bequests for the support of a *Christian* Church and keeping up *Christian* ordinances, the object of this argument seems to be, that it should now be applied to the development of the ethical and spiritual nature of the people, without the slightest reference to speculative opinions. The right to a share in the endowment ought not to depend, it is urged, "on the possession of an abstractedly true and supernaturally communicated speculation concerning God," but only on a right heart and a pure life, as these give the fullest manifestation of a divine life in man. "Speculative doctrines," says Mr. Wilson, "should be left to philosophical schools. A *national* Church must be concerned with the ethical development of its members."

We are not answerable for the clearness of this exposition of Mr. Wilson's views; for, to avoid any injustice to him, we adopt his own language as far as our limits will permit, and his expressions are studiously wary and guarded. But the general drift of his argument is evident enough towards this conclusion; that a belief in Christianity ought no longer to be a condition prerequisite for obtaining and holding office as a clergyman, and thereby sharing in the honors and endowments

of the Established Church. Now, whatever the Essayist may think, there is no doubt that this condition will continue to be insisted upon, at least for the present. Neither Parliament, nor Convocation, nor the great body of the English people, will favor any proposition to open the Church either for the entrance or the continuance of a class of clergymen who have got beyond Christianity, and no longer believe in an external revelation, or in any supernatural event whatever.

We are thus driven to examine the only remaining question, whether the Creeds, Articles, and canons which now limit and obstruct admission into the Church, cannot be so liberally interpreted that clergymen can squeeze in, or at any rate can stay in, if they are already within the precincts. The Essayist displays remarkable skill in casuistry while endeavoring to answer this question. More ingenious attempts to explain away the clearest language or to avoid the plainest dictates of conscience we have never heard of, save those exposed by Pascal in his immortal Provincial Letters. Thus, the sixth Article of the Church declares that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith," &c. Mr. Wilson's comment is, that this language requires nothing to be believed unless it be Scriptural; but it does not affirm that everything which is Scriptural is therefore true and must be believed. Under such terms, it is said, "one may accept literally, or allegorically, or as parable, or poetry, or legend," whatever portion of Holy Writ he chooses so to interpret. But does not the Article plainly teach that Scripture affords the ultimate and only test of doctrinal truth, and does it not thereby teach, by necessary implication, that every portion of Scripture must be believed? Though the "Canonical books of the Old and New Testament" are enumerated and defined as constituting "Holy Scripture," Mr. Wilson goes on to argue that, "even if the Fathers have usually considered 'Canonical' as synonymous with 'miraculously inspired,' there is nothing to show that their sense of the word must necessarily be applied to our own sixth Article."

The act of subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles, which is

required of all the clergy, is declared by the Essayist "to be inoperative upon the conscience by reason of its vagueness"; for the effect and meaning of "subscription" are nowhere plainly laid down. It amounts only to the acknowledgment of a law "to which the subscriber is in some sense subject." But the Church canons established in 1603 appear to affix a very definite meaning to the act of subscription. The fifth of these canons declares, that "whoever shall hereafter affirm that any of the Thirty-nine Articles is in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such that he may not with a good conscience *subscribe to the truth of them* (vel omnino ejusmodi ut in eorum veritatem salva conscientia subscribi nequeat), let him be excommunicated," and not be restored to his clerical office till he has publicly recanted his impious error.

"Yet an article may be very inexpedient, or become so; may be unintelligible, or not easily intelligible to ordinary people; it may be controversial, and such as to provoke controversy and keep it alive when otherwise it would subside; it may revive unnecessarily the remembrance of dead controversies, — all or any of these, without being 'erroneous'; and though not 'superstitious,' some expressions may appear so, such as those which seem to impute an occult operation to the Sacraments. The fifth canon does not touch the affirming any of these things, and more especially, that the Articles present truth disproportionately, and relatively to ideas not now current." — p. 182.

Another canon, the thirty-sixth, declares that no one shall be admitted to Holy Orders, or be collated to any benefice, or hold office as a catechist in either University, "unless he has first subscribed, in the manner and form by us received, the three following Articles"; and, "for avoiding all ambiguity," it is required that he shall use this formula of words in subscribing them: "I, N. N., willingly and sincerely subscribe the three preceding Articles, and all things contained in them." One of the three Articles thus subscribed declares that the signer "altogether approves" (or assents to, allows, *omnino comprobat*) the Thirty-nine Articles, and "acknowledges each and every one of them to be agreeable to the word of God." We subjoin at length Mr. Wilson's commentary upon this form of subscription.

“ We ‘ allow ’ many things which we do not think wise or practically useful ; as the less of two evils, or an evil which cannot be remedied, or of which the remedy is not attainable, or is uncertain in its operation, or is not in our power, or concerning which there is much difference of opinion, or where the initiation of any change does not belong to ourselves, nor the responsibility belong to ourselves, either of the things as they are, or searching for something better. Many acquiesce in, submit to, ‘ allow, ’ a law as it operates upon themselves, *which they would be horror-struck to have enacted* ; yet they would gladly and in conscience ‘ allow ’ and submit to it as part of a constitution under which they live, against which they would never think of rebelling, which they would on no account undermine, for the many blessings of which they are fully grateful, — they would be silent and patient, rather than join, even in appearance, the disturbers and breakers of its laws. Secondly, he ‘ acknowledgeth ’ the same to be agreeable to the word of God. Some distinctions may be founded upon the word ‘ acknowledge. ’ He does not maintain, nor regard it as self-evident, nor originate it as his own feeling, spontaneous opinion, or conviction ; but when it is suggested to him, put in a certain shape, when the intention of the framers is borne in mind, their probable purpose and design explained, together with the difficulties which surrounded them, *he is not prepared to contradict, and he acknowledges.* There is a great deal to be said, which had not at first occurred to him ; many other better and wiser men than himself have acknowledged the same thing, — why should he be obstinate ? Besides, he is young, and has plenty of time to reconsider it ; or he is old and continues to submit out of habit, and it would be too absurd, at his time of life, to be setting up as a Church reformer.

“ But after all, the important phrase is, that the Articles are ‘ agreeable to the Word of God. ’ This cannot mean that the Articles are precisely co-extensive with the Bible, much less of equal authority with it as a whole. Neither separately, nor altogether, do they embody all which is said in it, and inferences which they draw from it are only good relatively and *secundum quid* and *quatenus concordant*. If their terms are Biblical terms, they must be presumed to have the same sense in the Articles which they have in the Scripture ; and if they are not all Scriptural ones, they undertake in the pivot Article not to contradict the Scripture. The Articles do not make any assumption of being interpretations of Scripture or developments of it. The greater must include the less, and the Scripture is the greater.” — pp. 183, 184.

Moreover, there is a statute, the 13th of Elizabeth, declared by Sir William Scott to be still in full force as a law of the

land, which ordains that no person shall hold a benefice, unless he has previously subscribed the Articles, and unless, within two months after his induction, he shall have publicly read the said Articles in the parish church of that benefice "with declaration of his *unfeigned assent* to the same"; failing which declaration, he shall be *ipso facto* "immediately deprived." Respecting this statute, Mr. Wilson argues that "the meshes are too open for modern refinement." And he might have added, that no form of words whatever can be binding upon the conscience of any man who will allow himself so far to profit by the arts of what he here calls "modern refinement," but what we call base chicane and wicked casuistry, as to seek for "meshes" in the mere verbal expression of the promise, which may be open enough to allow him to *creep through*. We have been taught from early childhood, and should be ashamed to repeat the lesson to any others than young children, that the moral guilt of a falsehood is not palliated, but aggravated, by the equivocation which palterers with the sense, and attempts to keep the word of promise to the ear while breaking it to the hope; and that the opposite doctrine should be taught publicly, and in print, by one claiming to be a Christian clergyman, is to us a strange and mournful event. Yet Mr. Wilson, passing without notice over the epithet "unfeigned," which here qualifies the required assent, and after remarking that it is unnecessary "to repeat concerning the word 'assent' what has been said concerning 'allow' and 'acknowledge,'" goes on to argue as follows.

"*Forms of expression*, partly derived from modern modes of thought on metaphysical subjects, partly suggested by a better acquaintance than heretofore with the unsettled state of Christian opinion in the immediately post-apostolic age, *may be adopted* with respect to the doctrines enunciated in the five first Articles, *without directly* contradicting, impugning, or *refusing assent* to them, *but passing by the side of them*, — as with respect to the humanifying of the Divine Word and to the Divine Personalities." — pp. 185, 186.

Three of the five Articles here alluded to refer especially to the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and Atonement, and the Resurrection of Christ; and by "*forms of expression derived partly from modern modes of thought on metaphysical*

subjects," Mr. Wilson probably means the technical phraseology of Schleiermacher, Hegel, Strauss, and other German philosophers, which allows one to speak of a sort of Christ embodied in the consciousness of every Christian individual, or to identify the Saviour with the whole human race, saying that it is Humanity which unites the two natures, and which dies, rises, and ascends to heaven, belief in an historical Christ being excluded altogether. At any rate, such are the doctrines which, according to this Essayist, under the garb of modern metaphysical phraseology, are capable of "passing by the side of" the first five Articles of the English Church, "without directly contradicting, impugning, or refusing assent to them."

Now it is not for us, here or elsewhere, to maintain the verity of the Thirty-nine Articles as statements of sound theological doctrine, or to uphold the justice and expediency of fencing round the Church of England with so many creeds, canons, and Articles, as means of excluding heterodoxy. These are points to be considered only by that Church itself, to which it is notorious that the conductors of this journal have never belonged, and which would certainly consider our own theological doctrines as heterodox. The only question to be answered here is, whether beneficed clergymen of that Church, who are certainly free to leave it whenever they see fit, are nevertheless justified in remaining in it, performing its duties, and sharing its revenues, when their own theological opinions are such as have been here stated, and when they can 'allow,' 'acknowledge,' and declare their 'unfeigned assent' to its Articles and canons only by means of such equivocations and perversions of language as we have just quoted in their own words. And this is a matter for them to consider, not so much as clergymen, nor even as Christians, but simply as HONEST MEN. Adopt even Mr. Wilson's own low idea of the proper function of a national Church, — that its object is not to teach "an abstractedly true and supernaturally communicated speculation concerning God," but only to aid "the ethical development of its members." What sort of ethical development is that which elaborately teaches the art of explaining away, or creeping through the meshes of, the most deliberate

promises and the most solemn declarations of belief? How can man retain — we will not say, any faith in God, but — any confidence in his brother-man, if the binding force of every contract and the truthfulness of every asseveration were to be tried in the same scales in which Mr. Wilson weighs the obligation of a subscribed declaration of belief? These Essayists are teaching us, not merely a new system of speculative unbelief in theology, but a new code of practical ethics, which, if it were true, would render men as incapable of living together in peaceful society as if they were what Hobbes describes them to be, — grasping savages, whose insatiable cupidity can be restrained only by brute force.

One honorable exception must be made. Mr. C. W. Goodwin, the author of the next Essay in this volume, on “The Mosaic Cosmogony,” after completing his preparation for the ministry, has, if we are rightly informed, stripped off his gown and voluntarily abandoned the clerical profession, because he could not conscientiously subscribe the required declarations of belief. Such conduct affords the best practical rebuke of the course pursued by his associates in this volume, most of whom still continue to stand up every week in the face of a whole congregation, and solemnly repeat aloud the Apostles’ Creed, from its simple but lofty introduction, “I believe in God the Father Almighty,” even to its consoling and impressive close, “the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting”; though to three fourths of the clauses in that Creed, the only response which, in heart and conscience, they could make, would be, “I do not believe.”

Mr. Goodwin’s Essay need not be considered here at any length, as it is unexceptionable in tone, contains nothing new, and the topic of which it treats has been so much discussed elsewhere that it is fairly exhausted. We can only wonder at the exaggerated importance which has been attributed to the subject, and which has called forth so much discussion. The whole question turns upon the proper interpretation to be given to a few verses, or rather to a few words, in the first two chapters of Genesis. Perhaps a dozen different modes of interpreting them have been proposed, any one of which has a certain plausibility, while we agree with Mr. Goodwin in

thinking that not one of them is entirely free from objections. But give these objections their full weight, and what do they amount to? Any bearing which they can have upon a belief in Christianity is so remote and indistinct, a matter of such doubtful inference, that a person's sanity would almost be questionable who should allow them to perplex or darken his faith. Genesis, in many respects, stands alone among the books of the Bible. It is probably the oldest of them all, and perhaps the oldest written book of any length that is now extant. It is the record of a tradition of a primitive revelation to mankind. The record, as we now possess it, is imperfect, and the tradition was probably still more imperfect; but the authenticity of the primitive revelation itself is attested by the general coincidence of its contents with the latest and best-established discoveries of modern science; — a coincidence admitted by Mr. Goodwin himself, with all his disposition to pick out and exaggerate discrepancies in detail; — and a coincidence that must appear even miraculous, when it is remembered that the book was written long before the birth of anything that deserved the name of human science, and that all other cosmogonies which even approximate it in antiquity are absurd and worthless. After giving a very good abstract of the latest and most certain conclusions of the geologists, Mr. Goodwin says, "Now these facts do certainly tally to some extent with the Mosaic account, which represents fish and fowl as having been produced from the waters on the fifth day, reptiles and mammals from the earth on the sixth, and man as made last of all." But he adds that "the agreement, however, is far from exact." We admit it; and as Genesis was certainly not written for the purpose of anticipating the discoveries of modern science, and as the forms of expression and modes of thought which belonged to the age when it was written are very unlike those that are current in our own day, we are neither surprised nor disturbed at the want of exactness.

The Rev. Mark Pattison next contributes an historical essay on the "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688 — 1750." It is ingenious, entertaining, and sophistical. The facts are selected in order to sustain a preconceived theoretical opinion, — a foregone conclusion, which, by a common

rhetorical artifice, is nowhere expressly stated, though the way towards it is so skilfully marked out by selecting and marshalling the facts, that the unwary reader is entrapped into accepting it as his own deduction from known and acknowledged premises. Of course, for the very reason that the facts are *selected* for this purpose only, the statement of them is but half the truth, and therefore the conclusion towards which they seem to tend is just as likely to be one-sided or false, as if it did not even pretend to have any facts at all for its basis.

The thesis to be maintained is, that what are technically called "the Evidences" of Christianity are worthless; that elaborating and writing them out is both an indication and a cause of a very low state of theology; and that the study of them is unprofitable, and even degrading. And the historical proof of this doctrine is as follows. The eighteenth century, especially the thirty years which succeeded the peace of Utrecht (1714), though a period of great commercial and material prosperity for England, was "one of decay of religion, licentiousness of morals, public corruption, profaneness of language, — a day of rebuke and blasphemy." Mr. Pattison prettily and forcibly adds, "that it was an age whose poetry was without romance, whose philosophy was without insight, and whose public men were without character." This moral degradation, we are further informed, is not attributable to the material welfare of the country as its cause, but was due to the low state of theology, — especially to the fact that the theology of those times was mainly devoted to expositions of "the Evidences," — to repeated and futile attempts to prove what John Locke calls "the Reasonableness of Christianity." The conclusion which the reader is invited to draw for himself is, that *because* John Locke, Addison, Bentley, Berkeley, Butler, Leland, and many others, wrote frequently and vigorously in defence of Christianity, general infidelity ensued, and there was a wide-spread corruption of morals.

Now we believe, not that the display of umbrellas brought down the rain, but that the rain brought out the umbrellas. It is far more probable that the prevalence of infidelity induced Bentley, Berkeley, and Butler to write in defence of

religion, than that the writings of these men produced or enhanced the unbelief which they sought to cure. The chronology of the period favors this view. The most noted publications of the English Deists, as they are called, appeared before 1714, some of them, such as those of Blount and Shaftesbury, falling within the preceding century; while most of the answers to them were published after the Peace of Utrecht. And low as the state of religion and morals was during the thirty or fifty years after the accession of the House of Brunswick, during the half-century which preceded that event it was far worse. The reigns of the first two Georges were bad enough, but they did not equal, in profligacy, dissoluteness, and irreligion, those of the last two Stuarts. Charles II. was as worthless a monarch as ever sat on an English throne, — without heart, patriotism, morals, or religion; his court, ministry, and Parliament were as corrupt as he was, and his people were little better. James II. was a stupid and cruel bigot; and the Church under him — equally unprincipled, at first in its fawning submissiveness, and then in its rebellious intolerance — was worthy to have such a king for its temporal and spiritual head. Walpole and the Pelhams were not very scrupulous ministers; but they appear almost as saints when compared with Shaftesbury and the Cabal, with Danby and Rochester. The stage at this period was a brothel, the dramatists and poets are unfit for a modest woman to read, and the clergy, with a few shining exceptions, had neither respectability, talents, nor influence. From the corruption of those times English Deism was a natural outgrowth. Blount, Toland, and Shaftesbury were not very formidable opponents of religious belief, but their power consisted in the aptitude of the people to receive the lessons which they taught. They addressed a prepared and willing audience, who had already lent an itching ear to Hobbes, and were ready, soon afterwards, to listen to Collins, Woolston, Tindal, and Morgan.

The reaction against this woful dissoluteness and unbelief began as early even as the reign of Anne, — the writings of Locke, Newton, Bentley, and Addison certainly contributing towards the happy result. And the movement which they

began was nobly continued, during the two ensuing reigns, by some of the finest minds of which English literature and philosophy can boast, and with results which, though gradual and incomplete, were still broad and permanent. Immorality and unbelief at least became ashamed to show themselves as openly as before; they slunk into corners and hiding-places, and the general tone of literature became decorous and respectable. The public generally were weaned from the scoffs and ribaldry on which they had previously battered, and learned to respect religion and virtue, even if they did not always practise what they honored. The infidelity which had been so rampant at the beginning of the century now fell so rapidly out of fashion, that when Hume, at once the ablest and the most decorous of the Deists, published his Treatise on Human Nature, in 1738, he was obliged to confess that it fell still-born from the press, and did not obtain even the honor of a reply. That the theologians and philosophers who contributed to this happy result should have devoted their writings chiefly to an exposition of "the Evidences" and a defence of the doctrines of Christianity, is no more to be wondered at than that, at a much earlier age, Justin Martyr and Tertullian should have published Apologies for Christianity. In both cases, Christians were addressing a generation of Pagans.

It may suit Mr. Pattison's purpose, and fill out his triad of antitheses, to sneer at the philosophy of this period as "without insight." But it shows bad taste and defective knowledge to include in this sneer such men as Butler, the father of modern ethical science, not only in England, but for all Europe; Berkeley, the pure and refined spiritualist, and one of the most elegant writers and original philosophical thinkers that England has produced; Samuel Clarke, a co-worker with Newton, the well-matched opponent of Leibnitz, and one of the greatest masters of abstract metaphysical reasoning that the world has ever seen; and even Warburton, who, with all his defects of temper, has been well called "the last of our really *great* divines." To represent such men, with their coadjutors, Locke, Bentley, and Addison, as over-matched, or even well-matched, by such small fry as Blount, Toland, Collins, and Woolston, is but a piece of the same arrogance which declares

that the works of Barrow now “*excite perhaps only a smile of pity*”! Why, Bentley alone, the greatest classical scholar of modern times, appears, both in his Boyle Lectures and his controversy with Collins, like the giant Thor crushing his opponent with a single blow of his ponderous hammer. Yet this Essayist informs us, in his usual sneering tone, that “the more they demonstrated, the less people believed,” and that, if circumstances had not turned theological study another way, “the Deistical controversy might have gone on indefinitely, and the ‘*amabcean strain of objection and reply, cantare pares et respondere parati,*’ have been prolonged to this day.” But what victory could have been more decisive than the one achieved at least as early as 1750, before which time, as Mr. Pattison himself remarks, the Deists had first ceased to find an audience, and then ceased to write? When the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, “the last of the professed Deists,” were first published, in 1754, “the interest in them was already gone; they found the public cold or indisposed.” And we have already seen what was the reception of Hume sixteen years earlier.

The offence which Berkeley, Butler, and Clarke committed, and for which they are tried by the Rev. Mr. Pattison and found wanting, “expiating the attention they once engrossed by as universal an oblivion,” is that they wrote in defence of their religious faith when it was assailed by scoffers, and thus created one important department of English theology, the Evidences of Christianity. Our Essayist cherishes an intense dislike of these “Evidences,” and heaps upon them all the sarcasms which he can invent or muster. He calls them “that Old Bailey theology, in which, to use Johnson’s illustration, the Apostles are being tried once a week for the capital crime of forgery.” He tells us, in one place, that “neither the external nor the internal Evidences are properly theology at all”; and in another, that “they were the proper theology of an age whose literature consisted in writing Latin hexameters.” Then he calls them “home-baked theology,” and borrows one sarcasm from Maurice, “that the result of the whole is, that ‘it is safer to believe in a God, lest, if there should happen to be one, he might send us to hell for denying his exist-

ence''; and another from a Tractarian, that the general result is "three chances to one for revelation, and only two against it." He tells us that, when writing upon the Evidences was in fashion, "the divine went out into the streets, with his demonstration of the being and attributes of God printed on a broadside."

Perhaps a new standard of manners as well as of theology has been erected at Oxford; but here in New England, it would not be considered very decent and proper, it would not be "quite the thing," for a Christian clergyman to heap up such sarcasms upon such a subject. But Mr. Pattison knows best what the audience which he is addressing will most relish. It is only charitable to him to believe, that he objects to "the Evidences" not merely *as evidence*, for that would be to reject the only test by which truth can be distinguished from error, either in a court of justice, in science, in philosophy, or in our daily conduct; since, on all these occasions, we must make up our minds *on evidence* of one sort or another, or else give up man's noble prerogative of reason, and decide at haphazard. He does not, then, reject *evidence as such*, but only "the Evidences of Christianity"; or, in other words, his objection lies, not against the mode of proof, but *against the thing to be proved*. He will admit evidence in relation to every other topic under heaven, and will scoff at it only when it is in favor of Christianity. He will even admit it when it is *against* the Christian religion, but not when tending to establish it; for, as we have seen, one leading purpose of his associates in this very volume is, to heap together against this religion all the objections which they can gather, whether from English Deism, from modern physical science, or from German metaphysics. Fair play requires us to hear both sides. But these gentlemen cry out, 'Not so. Hear only the accuser; muzzle the defendant. Heap up all the testimony for the prosecution, and rule that for the defence out of court.'

These Essayists have good reason to sneer at "argumentative proof" of the truths of Christianity, and of "the genuineness and authenticity of the books of Scripture." If this proof can be got rid of, — not answered, but dogmatically pushed aside and ruled out of the case, — then Scripture has

no authority to decide anything. The Word of God ceases to be the arbiter in our theological disputes, and all questions are to be answered, as if Jesus Christ and his Apostles had never spoken, only by intuitive reason and by what each man fancies to be the inner light in his own soul. The Bible is no longer the religion of Protestants, but every man's own intellectual intuitions make up his theology. We shall thus have as many systems of theology as there are systems of metaphysics, and a change in the whole fabric of our religious faith will be inevitable every time a new philosophy comes into vogue. The *facts* of Christianity being entirely set aside, and its *doctrines* being no longer tried by the only test claiming to be authoritative for all, its *name* will no longer have any distinctive meaning, but will be just as applicable to one creed or form of belief as another. It will no longer mean the religion taught by Jesus of Nazareth, but will come to signify, in the mouths of different persons, either Buddhism, or Hegelianism, or Mormonism, or the Spiritualism that is dictated by ricketty mahogany tables. "Theology," says Mr. Pattison, "is, first and primarily, the contemplative speculative habit, by means of which the mind places itself already in another world than this; — a habit begun here, to be raised to perfect reason hereafter." Here is no reference to any inspired guide or help, no deference to any authority. Theology, as thus described, finds its only source and regulation in the intuitions of pure reason, as these appear in each individual mind, and its doctrines are not to be proved or taught, but to be felt.

Want of space compels us to pass hurriedly over the only remaining Essay in this volume, on the Interpretation of Scripture, by Professor Jowett. It is chiefly an argumentative restatement of the theory which this writer propounded and applied at length in his Commentary on some of the Epistles of St. Paul, that diversities of opinion on theological subjects have arisen mainly out of "the error of introducing into the interpretation of Scripture the notions of a later age." His opinion seems to be, (for it is nowhere declared with much distinctness,) that the teachings of our Saviour and his Apostles, being addressed primarily to a few small communities of believers in some of the Roman provinces about eighteen cen-

turies ago, have comparatively little meaning or pertinency for civilized Christendom in these later times. "The temper of accommodation," which has led to diverse and contradictory interpretations of Scripture, shows itself, he says, "especially in two ways; first, in the attempt to adapt the truths of Scripture to the doctrines of the creed; secondly, in the adaptation of the precepts and maxims of Scripture to the language or practice of our own age." According to this view, to attribute our modern theological opinions to Christ and his Apostles is as great an anachronism, as to attribute to them our system of philosophy.

This theory is evidently based upon a very low and rationalistic view of the origin of the Christian religion. It assumes in the outset, that the mission of our Saviour did not include any general revelation to all mankind, but only a special communication of certain truths which it particularly behooved one nation and one age to know, and from which subsequent generations can only glean a few isolated hints on matters pertinent to their own condition. Furthermore, this is as much a theory which will bias all interpretations of Scripture made by those who hold it, as if they came to an examination of the text with a predisposition to find in it every clause of the Nicene Creed and every one of the Thirty-nine Articles. Professor Jowett thinks he has found a specific wherewith to avoid the errors of all former commentators; but his own method turns out to be a mere repetition of the old blunder, which extracts from Scripture only fresh confirmations of preconceived errors.

"Hic liber est in quo quærit sua dogmata quisque;
Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua."

We here close our examination of this remarkable volume, — an examination protracted to a greater length, as many of our readers will doubtless think, than is justified either by the merits or the demerits of the work under review. But, as already remarked, the character and position of the writers may lend great significance to a book which would otherwise pass quietly and quickly to oblivion. We shall look with interest for the further history of its reception in the Church and the University to which most of its writers belong.

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