





LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS



17
RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Two Papers

READ AT THE

ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH CONGRESS
IN 1878 AND 1879

BY

REV. H. W. WATKINS, M.A. LOND. ET OXON.

SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD; HONORARY FELLOW AND PROFESSOR OF LOGIC
AND METAPHYSICS IN KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON; EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO
THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM;
AND WARDEN OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE, CANTERBURY

RIVINGTONS

WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON

Magdalen Street, Oxford; Trinity Street, Cambridge

MDCCCLXXIX

PREFATORY NOTICE

SOME who heard these papers wish to have them in a form more permanent than the columns of a newspaper, more convenient than the pages of an official Report. Others, whose judgment I am bound to respect, have thought that they might be of use to ordinary readers, who have neither time nor power to consult abstruse volumes. I am well aware that papers on these subjects written for a mixed audience, and to be read in twenty minutes, can be of little value ; but the interests here involved are supreme, and no man has a right to withhold that which may be of *any* value to *any* mind.

H. W. W.

Modern Doubts and Difficulties in Relation to Revealed Religion

READ AT THE SHEFFIELD MEETING, OCTOBER 1, 1878.

FROM the day on which I accepted the invitation of the committee to offer to this Congress some remarks on "Modern Doubts and Difficulties in Relation to Revealed Religion," I have taken every opportunity which presented itself of inquiring, from persons most likely to know, what these modern doubts and difficulties are. The result of my inquiries—and I say it with serious earnestness—is that I know of none. That there are doubts in the minds of many thinkers with regard to revealed truth; that there are difficulties in the path which intelligent faith must tread; that these doubts are with something of the positiveness, and with something also of the shallowness of our own day, asserted as though they were certainties; that these difficulties are too often with a culpable thoughtlessness placed as stumblingblocks in the way of the soul seeking for its God—all this I know, as every man must know whose experience has brought him into contact with any considerable portion of the thought-currents which are flowing around and beneath us. But that these doubts and difficulties are in themselves essentially modern; that they are anything more than the ghosts of foes slain by our forefathers, taking shape in modern scientific terms; that they are in reality anything more than the doubts and difficulties which in every age have come to the mind trying to think out the problem of its existence—this I do *not* know; and this I know the less the more I inquire into the present and the past.

I shall not, therefore, seek in your presence to slay the oft-times slain. Our armoury is abundantly stocked with

weapons for doing so, and is accessible to us all. Nor shall I seek to deal with the many forms in which old difficulties are now clothing themselves. I cannot, indeed, claim to be a child of the higher criticism, or to have any such wide and accurate knowledge of the latest scientific investigations as to warrant my discussing them. There are those¹ to follow me who have ; and so far as they bear upon the present question I doubt not that they will be fully and justly dealt with. But my own experience leads me to think that the so-called scientific difficulties are not those which now press on men most heavily. The time has passed when it was possible to send a shock through the minds of thousands of pious Christians by calling attention to the fact that the Mosaic cosmogony was not expressed in the technical phraseology of the nineteenth century ; and men do not now feel startled, nor fear that some Christian doctrine is at stake, when they hear that the Sinaitic MS. has a reading varying from that of the received text. The time has passed, too, if it ever really existed, when men accepted scientific hypotheses as final truths. The temper of present thought, at least, will not bear the ascription of infallibility even to the popes of science ; and to claim it is but to bring to the front a host of Protestants, who find in the conflicting assertions of different writers, or the changing opinion of the same writer, proof that even material phenomena may sometimes be misread, and that generalisations from them may be sometimes too hastily drawn. All true thinkers are, moreover, becoming impatient of the modern restriction of the word "science" to inductions from these material phenomena, and of the term "fact" to those things which the eye can see and the hand can handle. They know that there is a science of mind no less certain than that of matter, and a spiritual experience not less real but more real than that which is natural. They know that there are such things as hopes, and fears, and feelings, and beliefs, and thoughts, and convictions ; and they know that these are facts, and facts having a more important bearing upon their lives than any facts of the outer world. They are becoming content, therefore, to allow the physical investigator to do his work and to say his say. In so

¹ Rev. Professor Stanley Leathes, D.D. ; Rev. Robinson Thornton, D.D. ; Rev. Brownlow Maitland ; Rev. J. B. Lowe, D.D.

far as this work is done reverently, and the results stated with the humility which characterises the true student, they are ready with open hand to welcome both the worker and his work, and to bid him God-speed as one of the too few who are taking from the ignorance of, and adding to the knowledge of, the human race. But the liberty which they allow they also claim; and they reject as wholly unscientific the attempt to ignore supersensible facts, and to base all knowledge upon a practical denial of them. Seeking to base their own theory of being upon definitely ascertained mental facts, they find as the most universal fact of human life a belief in the existence of a Divine Being. For our present purpose we are entitled to assume this as acknowledged, but it may be convenient that the assumption should be made in words which by an almost open secret are known to come from two of the most eminent physicists of our day. "Let us begin," say the authors of *The Unseen Universe*, "by stating at once that we assume, as absolutely self-evident, the existence of a Deity who is the Creator of all things." Now, with this fact meeting men in the constitution of their own minds, in every record of the human mind in the past, read in every language which has crystallised past thought, found among all peoples of whom present discovery has made them aware, the first question which presses for solution is the relation of the thinking mind to the Divine Being whom it necessarily thinks. For the believer in the Christian revelation this question has been for ever settled. But there are two currents of thought which have become and are now becoming prominent among us, which are constantly leading to a restatement of the question; and it is in connection with these that the real burden of doubts and difficulties in relation to revealed religion is being felt. There is, on the one side, the tendency to deny the possibility of any revelation from God or any true knowledge of Him; there is, on the other side, error ranking itself, as always, on the extremes of truth—the tendency to regard Christianity as one among many revelations, more perfect indeed than many which have preceded it, less perfect than others which are to follow it. These are the currents which, I am profoundly convinced, are influencing no small part of the best intellectual life and energy of our country; it is these which our teaching must stem if we are

really to preach a revelation from God to man. Bear with me if I further express my conviction that they are to be stemmed not by argument, but by life ; not by theories, but by practice ; not by seeing faults in our foes, but by searching for them in ourselves ; and bear with me if, because I have this conviction, I refer but briefly to the dangers which must be but too well known, and somewhat more at length to the safeguards which are but too often forgotten.

The first of the tendencies which I referred to has come to us in its modern form from parents who would have been slow to recognise it as their offspring. The greatest of the Scotch philosophers, and the most learned, if not the greatest of the English philosophers of this century, alike held and taught that the Infinite was unknowable by the human intellect. The one is said to have frequently asserted, the other taught in words of definite meaning, that what the mind could not grasp intellectually it could lay hold of by the faculty of faith. The absolute cannot be reached by thought : God is known only by revelation. It was but a step from this position—whether legitimate or not it is beyond my present purpose to inquire—to deny both faculties alike. God cannot be reached by thought : God cannot be known by revelation. And this Agnosticism—for the tendency has become a system, with a formal title and many disciples—is presented to us as the highest development of modern thought ; and to be a true Agnostic is the highest aim of not a few of both teachers and taught in colleges and halls devoted by our forefathers to the establishment of learning, virtue, and religion. The secrets of the power by which this system has gained its hold over men are not far to seek. The region of the mysterious has for the young thinker a fascination like that which the peak of the cloud-capped mountain has for the young athlete. The student's devotion to one line of thought and reading for which the mind has had little preparation necessarily unfits it for a true estimate of the whole world of thought beyond. He cannot pass beyond the narrow limits of his own or his tutor's theories, while the masses of mankind are living in life's problems, and living in them are solving them. Most minds in the crisis which they pass through, as boyhood expands to manhood, are brought into contact with some of the doubts and difficulties of which we have

been thinking. What if there be this solution to them all? Hard is it to know God. Easy is it to do as others have done, and seek to rest in the assertion that God cannot be known. Most men, also, as they have passed through this crisis have realised the fearful darkness cast over their whole being by sin. The God of their childhood, of whom they learned, and to whom they lisped in prayer by mother's knee, has seemed to be further and further from them, because they have gone further and further from Him. But there are intervals in their intellectual selfism when the higher nature asserts itself; there are lulls in the storm of passion when the still small voice of God is heard speaking to their souls. But that voice—how awful is it! Gladly would they "say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." What if a friendly Agnosticism can cast over them the shield of its darkness, promising the troubled mind rest, even if it be the darkness and the rest of spiritual death? They say "Peradventure the darkness shall cover me," but 'to Him the darkness and light are both alike.'

I know not if there exists a true Agnostic—a man without the faculty for knowing God. There are men and women deprived of one or other of the senses; there are men and women deprived of reason. They are the objects of compassion of every heart. There may be men and women deprived of—who have deprived themselves of—the higher spiritual faculty. If such there be, let them, too, be the objects of our compassion, but let them not seek to be our guides. A consistent Agnosticism should at least be dumb. I know not if to any minds Agnosticism can bring the rest of which it speaks. I do know that some minds, in making the trial, have sunk in blank despair beneath the burden, until the light of reason itself has been quenched before its awful darkness. I do know that others, after making the trial, have been saved as by fire, and will bear, as long as life shall continue, the marks of the fearful ordeal through which they have passed. I do know that the gospel of Agnosticism is a bitter mockery of mankind, and that the hearts of the people, in their need, and sorrow, and sin, longing for a Father's comfort, and support, and forgiveness—in their joy and gratitude hymning a Father's love—can never offer their sacrifice of prayer and praise on an altar raised—"Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ"—to an Unknown God.

The other tendency to which I referred is one which has grown up among us during the last few years, and is destined, probably, to be much more powerful in the next generation than it is now. It arises in part from our insular position in the past, and will come more and more to the front as the discoveries of science and the march of civilisation connect us more closely with the brotherhood of mankind. It will be more painfully felt, too, if it is guided by men less learned, less reverential, less Christian than those who are now its leaders. But, in any case, the study of Ethnic Faiths, and the science of Comparative Religion, must be attended with difficulty, and be fraught with danger. The deepest thoughts and feelings of the inmost heart—and these constitute a man's religion—escape observation, and are outside the domain of experiment. You cannot arrange them in a cabinet, and you cannot analyse them in a crucible. The root of a word may represent the fossil of a life which it is interesting for us to examine; but the life itself has gone, and the life was the religion. There must, moreover, be always a twofold danger even when we have arrived at correct knowledge of the religions of mankind.

On the one hand, many of us have been trained in schools of thought which, based upon misinterpretation of the words of Christ and His Apostles, have taught us to believe that outside the limits of Christianity there can be absolutely no true religion and no soul-ennobling thoughts. Now, we find in the religions of Egypt and of India and of China thoughts which seem to us the very echoes of the Gospel; and yet they were fixed in languages which we are but now beginning to read, centuries before the Christian era. We find in the crude worship of Africans, and South Sea Islanders, yearnings after the Eternal, and thoughts about Him which are closely akin to our own. We are brought, moreover, face to face with such facts as that in this nineteenth Christian century the number of nominal Christians in the world does not exceed 360,000,000, while the number of nominal Buddhists alone is some 500,000,000; or that Christian England is at this moment by far the greatest Muhammadan Power in the world, and that 41,000,000 of British subjects are followers of Islam. If an average English Christian such as we are thinking of will sit down calmly before a map of the world coloured so as to show the different races and religions,

he will realise truths which he will not find it easy to reconcile with his older faith, and with the justice and mercy of God. These facts will come before us more and more. Representatives of these nationalities and these religions meet us in our streets, speak to us from our platforms and through the press, and they ask what message Christianity has for them? That question we cannot, we dare not, avoid.

On the other hand, there are many among us, though not of us, who would place the teaching of Christ side by side with that of Confucius, or of Buddha, or of Zoroaster; giving it, indeed, a higher place, but making the difference one of degree and not of kind. We feel to a man that Christianity can never, never take that place. This reverence is the involuntary homage which error pays to truth, but truth dare not accept it. To grant it is to grant too much or too little. Christianity is true or false. If false it has no right to the place they assign to it. If true its very essence is in the claim to be *the* revelation of God to man in the person of Jesus Christ, and its charter is in the all-embracing words of its Founder—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." If Christianity be true it must be, as it ever has been, a missionary religion, aiming to be nothing less than, and destined to be nothing less than, the universal religion of mankind.

The words which I have already spoken have taken more of your time than I had foreseen. In the minutes that are left to me let me dwell upon some of our own weak points, where doubts and difficulties are chiefly lodged, and which form, therefore, the real strength of our foes.

The chief of these is the old truth, which we need to take afresh to heart—that our whole conception of a revelation is too often that of the written Word alone, and that we are content with that written Word without ever grasping the power of its inner meaning. Now revelation is, as the very word implies, a drawing back of a veil. What veil? Not one which covers the Divine Being, but one which rests upon the heart of man. And the man whose inner being has not been brought face to face with the Divine Being has yet to learn what the very essence of Revelation is. Apply this simple test, and ask how far the England of an open Bible and free Christianity has ever received a revelation from God? It is to put the same truth in

another form, if I lay stress upon the fact that the great source of our danger is the wholly inadequate teaching of the young in the simplest elements of religious truth. A knowledge of the outer form in which the revelation is contained they have; of the great truth of the revelation itself they are for the most part wholly ignorant. If I were to examine an ordinary middle-class school—and the same remark applies with equal force to schools of lower grade, and with, it may be, greater force to schools of a higher grade—the boys would be able to tell me all the names of the kings of Israel and Judah, and would perhaps say them backwards as well as forwards, but there would be scarcely an answer if I asked them of the revelation of God to David, by which he passed from sin to holiness. They could all, perhaps, draw for me a map of St. Paul's missionary journeys without a mistake; but there would hardly be a reply if I asked them of the wondrous truths which he preached wherever he went, and which were a revelation to the heathen world. If I were to examine an ordinary class in a theological college I should find that they knew the last views of the last commentator much better than they knew the text of the Bible itself, and that they knew the text much better than the spiritual truth contained in it. If I were to examine the books on an ordinary drawing-room table, I should find the last quarterlies and the last monthlies, with a criticism, perhaps, on the Fourth Gospel, or the method of Butler's *Analogy*, and I should find young men and young women reading and discussing these, who had never understood either St. John or the *Analogy*, and could not, therefore, possibly judge whether their critics had. All this is not to be wondered at when the nurse-maid, and the tutor, and the schoolmaster are employed to do what from their very position the natural, or spiritual parents alone can do—to train the child whom God has given them, and whom God will require at their hands. If children grow up with a mere form which is called religion, or with a caricature of religion, worse even than a mere negation, it is no matter for wonder that in the crises of their lives this form or caricature gives way, and they become the bitterest foes of that in which they trusted and found it did not sustain them. The remedy is in the hands of the mothers and fathers of England, in the hands of every woman or man to whom God has given the

greatest of all privileges and the greatest of all responsibilities—that of moulding the character of a child. They cannot, indeed, feed a child with spiritual meat, but they can watch and pray that the milk be pure and free from the poison of deceit. They can teach in their power and not in form the simple truths of the Gospel which the very relation of child and parent will make clear, and those truths will prove an invulnerable armour for the child they love, in the after battle of life. That youth will need no dark cloud of Agnosticism to deliver him from all thought of God, who has been really taught that in Jesus Christ God is his Father, loving and caring for and forgiving him, and that if he sins Jesus Christ is the propitiation for his sins, and is an advocate with the Father. That man will feel no difficulty in the wider spread of some gleams of light, who has been taught that there is a Light which lighteth every man, and that the Great Shepherd has sheep in other folds whom He is ever leading, that there may be one Shepherd and one flock. He will rather regard every ray of the many-coloured lights which meet him in nature, in history, in the religions of the world, as parts of the great whole, which are to be combined in the pure light of the Eternal Day. He will claim all light, and all life, and all love as Christian, because Christ is the Light and the Life of the world, and Love is the nature of God. He will believe that men who, in their gloom, have but the light of a star, and follow that light, will be guided until it stand over the place where the Child lies, and they bow in homage before the Incarnate Son of God revealing God to man.

Another of our weak points is that our teaching is too negative. We allow the enemy to fight upon our ground; we ought rather to fight upon his. It is a dangerous sign when the apologetic literature of a country is stronger than its dogmatic, and when a large proportion of the sermons we hear have for their chief aim to prove the truth of Christianity, or meet the objection of the last German critic, which the preacher knows perchance only by hearsay. Our commission is to preach the Gospel; we may safely leave the result in God's hands. The strength of our position is in the power of Christianity over the minds of men, and the reformation of the world by its means. When did Apostle preach or write without setting forth the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? We may

count on our fingers the great successful religious teachers of our own day. They are not the men who deal most with modern doubts and difficulties in relation to revealed religion, but they are those who deal most with the grand old certainties and blessings which it has brought to man.

Another and the last of our weak points which I shall dwell upon, and that but for a moment, is the small degree in which we prove to the world by singleness of purpose and devotion of life that we have ourselves received, and therefore can declare to others, a revelation from God. It is now more than twelve years ago since Keshub Chunder Sen, while lecturing in Calcutta, used these words:—"I regard every European settler in India as a missionary of Christ, and I have a right to demand that he should always remember and act up to his high responsibilities. But alas! owing to the reckless conduct of a number of pseudo-Christians, Christianity has failed to produce any wholesome moral influence on my countrymen." That remark was cheered to the echo; and the world will always feel that it has a right to make a like demand of us, and a right to exaggerate our failures. If we could, clergy and laity, speaker and hearer alike, go forth from this Church Congress filled with the true spirit of Christianity, living it, and in our lives declaring it, we should carry with us the powerful evidence of a revealed religion—evidence before which all doubts and difficulties have vanished in the past, do vanish in the present, and will vanish to the end of time.

Religious Benefits from Recent Science and Research

READ AT THE SWANSEA MEETING, OCTOBER 9, 1879.

THE words religion, science, research, are all words of which the meaning is vague, and the limits hard to define. The term twenty minutes is on the other hand a term of very definite meaning, and its limits are, in Congress Halls at least, marked in a very practical way. Let me then employ one or two of these minutes in marking out such parts of our almost boundless subject as I may be able to speak of in the minutes that remain. One evident limit is imposed for me. It could be right for few men—it would certainly be wholly wrong for him who is now addressing you—to follow an Oxford Professor¹ whose name is as a household word at these assemblies; to precede a Cambridge Professor,² who if less known to *us* by his spoken, is known to all by his written words; and, coming between these men, to darken subjects which they have illuminated, and made peculiarly their own. It can hardly be by accident that this middle position has been given me. A whole hour of the pure light of science may be too dazzling for the untrained eye, and an interval of shade has been in kindness provided. Be it mine then to look at these things, as they come within the ordinary powers of vision, and present themselves as practical questions of life. I may also exclude from "Science" all that outer fringe of unverified hypotheses in the darkness of which sciolists delight to dwell; and where they find spectral giants that would consume not only our faith but us—did they but themselves exist. To call all this "science," "knowledge," would be to insult the majesty of truth, and to rob earnest and humble thinkers of the homage which every man

¹ Rev. Professor Pritchard, F.R.S.

² Professor G. G. Stokes, F.R.S.

accords them, that we may do reverence to men whose only claim to it is based on the hardihood of ignorance. And on the other hand, "Religion" is limited for the purposes of this meeting to its simplest and therefore widest conception. We have to deal, not with science in its relation to Christianity, nor yet with science in its relation to Revealed Religion—this was a question for the last Church Congress—but with the benefits, and I presume that I may add or non-benefits, to Religion as such, from recent science and research.

Now the currents of higher religious thought in England, as far as I am able to trace them, are being influenced by two main forces—one the theory of Evolution; the other Comparative Theology, or the so-called Science of Religion itself. It will be found, I believe, that while there are brooks leading in various directions on either side, these are the great rivers in which men's thoughts are flowing, or to which they are tending. Permit me then to address to you some brief remarks on each of these subjects, and to add to them some of a more general kind.

1. The theory of Evolution comes to us with much of the charm of novelty, and commends itself as emphatically of British growth. And though to some of us much that we now read in English is strangely like what we have before read in the German of Schelling, or Goethe, or Hegel; and the whole theory little but a development of the teaching of Leibnitz; and though others among us may think we are hearing again half-forgotten passages from the Greek philosophers, and are quite sure that this and that thought may be found in the Latin Fathers, ay! and by the deeper reader, in the Hebrew Scriptures themselves; yet it remains undoubtedly true that this theory, in its present completion of principle and illustration, is the colossal work of a living Englishman, of whom his age and country may well be proud. I know not whether it is scientifically valid; it is probable, indeed, that this induction of inductions is but a step to higher inductions still, and that we shall live to hear our girls and boys at school laugh at us for stopping on the first summit, and thinking we were on the highest point of the range. But I feel sure that when the history of this century comes to be written from the standpoint of the future, the name of Herbert Spencer will be found in the very first rank among

those of English workers and thinkers. In ultimate principles I differ from him *toto cælo*, but I am therefore the more anxious to acknowledge the greatness of his work and the philosophical spirit in which it has been conducted.

What then is this theory? "Evolution is a change from indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, through successive differentiations and integrations." I have not forgotten that we are in the shade period. This gleam of scientific light is Mr. Spencer's, not mine. But it is a gleam of light. Look at it for a moment and you will see. The writer means not, as is too often said, that everything in its mature form is the development of a germ which was as a miniature edition of the larger work, microscopic indeed, yet perfect in all its parts—nay, he holds it to be absolutely "proved that no germ, animal or vegetable, contains the slightest rudiment, trace, or indication of the future organism," and that "the first process set up in every fertilised germ is a process of repeated spontaneous fissures, ending in the production of a mass of cells, not one of which exhibits any special character"—but he means that everything commences in a simple rudimentary state, and rises by a countless number of distinct stages to its determinate form; and that this form commences in its turn the downward course of dissolution; and that through these successive differentiations and integrations all things are developed. Physiology, geology, astronomy, zoology, sociology are all subject to this law. The solar system itself will by this law finally pass away into the nebulous matter from which it was evolved. Now all this may, or may not, be true. Let us from our lower standpoint grant that it is true. The grant is a large one, but for the moment let us lend our assent—not give it—and what then? How is our simple idea of religion affected by it? Mr. Spencer shall answer. "The genesis of an atom," he tells us, "is no easier to conceive than that of a planet. Indeed, far from rendering the universe less mysterious than before, it makes a much greater mystery of it. Creation by fabrication is much lower than creation by evolution. A man can bring a machine together, he cannot make a machine that develops itself. That our harmonious universe should formerly have existed potentially in the state of diffused matter without form, and that it should gradually have attained its present organisation, is much more wonderful than

its formation, according to the artificial method supposed by the vulgar would be. Those who consider it legitimate to argue from phenomena to noumena have good right to maintain that the nebular hypothesis implies a primary cause as superior to the mechanical God of Paley as that is to the fetish of the savage." We may object to the wording of this answer; but its central truth is evident. Science in her advances along the lines of Evolution, as in all the tracks she treads, unveils to us at every step the Infinite and the One; and in doing so, she leads Religion by the hand and bids her wonder and adore. This law indeed, like every law, answers the question "How?" To the man that follows it to the utmost verge of thought, and, eagerly looking into the darkness still beyond, feels that the mystery of existence remains unsolved, and cries "Why?" "Whence?" it can furnish no answer. The agonised appeal that must be, will be, answered, strikes against it as against the granite of the mountain side, and the man listening with outstretched head, and ear intent to catch the smallest whisper in reply, finds in despair nothing but the dying echo of his own voice, "Why?" "Whence?"

2. The systematic study and tabulation of religions, which forms the science of Comparative Theology, is far less English than is the theory of Evolution; most of the materials come to our hands from foreign sources, and especially from the indefatigable and self-denying labour of our neighbours in Holland. But that they do come, and that they are being translated, read, and digested, let our current literature witness. Few of us probably have any conception of the immense amount of scientific research which has been devoted to this particular question by specialists in Holland and Germany during the last few years I refer to this for a moment because I want to show you the importance and value of the statement which I am about to read. It is taken from the *Outlines of the History of Religion*, by Dr. Tiele, Professor of the History of Religions in the University of Leiden. The competence of Dr. Tiele to speak on such questions is beyond all doubt; and no one who has read his works will think him unduly inclined to uphold older views. He tells us—I read from the English translation—"The statement that there are nations or tribes which profess no religion rests either on inaccurate observation or a confusion of ideas

No tribe or nation has yet been met destitute of belief in any higher Being; and travellers who asserted their existence have been afterwards refuted by the facts. It is legitimate, therefore, to call religion in its most general sense a universal phenomenon of humanity."

We have, then, these results from the particular lines of science of which we are thinking. Let us for a moment place them side by side. Evolution, admitting even that all which is claimed for it is true, and drawing no further inference than that which its ablest advocate has drawn, so far from taking from us the consciousness of adoring wonder in the presence of a power which transcends all efforts of comprehension, increases it by the multiple of infinity. A power to be adored; there is the scientific formula for the one element of religion. Comparative Theology asserts that the belief in higher beings is a universal phenomenon of humanity. Hearts to adore; there is the other element of religion. I know indeed that Evolution has told us nothing of the infinity to which it necessarily leads. "Incomprehensible power," "inscrutable reality," "potential existence," "nature," "force," or, as if the plural were stronger than the singular, "forces," or these words deified by being written in capitals by men whose very fingers would assert the living God their intellects cannot grasp; such are the expressions, not for the Being, but for the power to be adored. But the heart of humanity—and note once again that it is the universal phenomenon, extending through all the centuries of time, and found in all the latitudes of place, crystallised in the language of every nomad race, and the keystone of every institution of civilised mankind, whispered at every birth, uttered at every crisis of life, sobbed over every grave—the heart of humanity bears with a faith in a higher Being. And will Science tell us that the motion of every atom of matter is guided with unerring wisdom, that in all the complexity of this universe—so vast that it is unthinkable—Evolution is silently, and without one false step, doing her eternal work; that sun and moon, planets and stars, are poised with such accuracy that on this earth (so insignificant in the solar system that seen from the sun it would not be as large as the smallest stop on the paper from which I read) man can predict their exact positions with unfailing certainty; that all, all is set right, and that the

heart of man alone goes wrong? Or will she assert that faculty everywhere implies an object, that eyes are made wherewith to see, and ears wherewith to hear; that in the struggle for existence the strongest only can survive, and the unneeded ceases to exist; and will she say in the same breath that this faith-power of mankind implies no being from whom it came, to whom it tends; that though it has existed through every struggle and survived every attempt to make it cease, it is not needed, and is not strong? Or will she admit that every faculty of man tends to transcend itself; that Intellect, rising by successive steps, generalises from law to yet higher law, and reaching the highest point declares that there is yet a higher; that Imagination in her search for the beautiful fixes an ideal she never can attain, and that in every department of art the ideal realised fixes a higher ideal still; that Conscience in its assertion of right, duty, retribution, feels that these come not from an imperfect human law, and that they are even where no human law exists; that Affection, putting forth her powers to love, finds that no loved object can satisfy them, and, feeling that the most perfect human love is less than the love she needs, declares there must be a love beyond; that, in a word, Intellect, Imagination, Conscience, Affection, are with unceasing claim craving to see the invisible, and yet that there is no invisible to see? Or will she admit that in every department of intellectual work axiom must be assumed and postulate be granted; that these are the very foundation of all reasoning, and that Reason itself is but the architect, drawing its plans indeed with compass and rule, testing the building with square and plummet, but demanding a foundation in the solid rock on which its own first stone shall be laid; and will she tell us that Reason, in the sphere of religious thought alone, is competent to build without foundation; that here no axiom shall be assumed, no postulate shall be granted; that rigid demonstration shall be demanded of that which every man knows without demonstration, and cannot know by it; that the very existence of the individual man, as well as the existence of God, must be proved by philosophy, or shall not be believed in at all? Or will she, seated in the seclusion of the watch-tower of her own building, look down upon the seething masses of humanity in their hopes, their fears, their struggles, their affections, their

yearnings for the life above, beyond, before; and assert that all this is the sentiment of the vulgar mob, unknown to the intellectual man? Will she, that is, bid man crush out of his own nature one part, the highest part, of his very being, and following the guidance of intellect alone, declare that the heart—after he has destroyed it—beats with sentiment no more?

But why weary you with these questionings? Science makes such claims only in her moments of frenzy, and she then is suicidal, and falls slain by her own hand. Judge her not by these moments, but look at her in the calm fairness of her beauty, in the vista of a long past. That past, too, has had its masters of men who know; masters represented by such names as Augustine and Gregory, Pascal, Descartes, and Leibnitz, Kepler and Newton, Bacon and Locke; shall I hesitate in a Church Congress to add Richard Hooker and Joseph Butler, or if I passed them over would not this border-town of these dioceses of my fatherland add Edward Copleston and Connop Thirlwall? Sirs, these men were giants in the vastness of their intellectual strength, though children, *because* children in the humility of their faith. Who are the children in intellect that will climb upon their shoulders and cry, "We are taller than our fathers?" Who will dare to bid us think that these men were intellectually imbeciles, or morally knaves; that the country they saw by faith is a dreamland of non-existence, that the moral power of the lives they lived is the outflow of weakness? Are we, then, to believe that the platform of scientific knowledge is the ultimate limit of human faculty, that upon it we may pace backward and forward, but that it is bounded on every side by a great abyss, into which no ray of light can ever pass, from which no ray of light can ever come; that every living power of every living man is ever to crave and never to be satisfied, though humanity itself declares it has been satisfied; that the hungering soul of a famine-struck world is to cry to Heaven for bread, and for bread receive a stone? Are we commanded to believe all this by the very science which asserts that there is no such thing as faith? *Credat Judæus!* Let the beliefless believe it!

Religion, then, rests upon ultimate axioms, which as they are beyond science to establish, so are they beyond science to

impugn. Science is the *peculium* of the few, and from its very nature ever changing ; religion is the compass of the lives of all, and in essence always the same. Science may not lay her foundations, but it may shape her buildings, may reject this stone or that as unworthy of a place in her walls, may, walking hand and hand with her, guide her in the building of a truly Catholic Church where wisdom, knowledge, faith, and love may together chant the Creator's praise. Claims have indeed been made by extremists, in the name of science, at which religion stands aghast ; and dogmas have been uttered, and deeds have been wrought, in the name of religion that no intelligent man can receive or sanction. But science is not answerable for human ignorance ; nor is religion for human sin. True science must be in a real sense religious ; true religion must be in a real sense scientific. Intellect has always been and always must be, *intellectus quærens fidem* ; faith has always been and always must be *fides quærens intellectum*. Intellect and faith, science and religion, are distinct in thought, but inseparable in fact. God has united them in the individual man ; God has united them in the human race. "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."



