

"ESSAYS AND REVIEWS"

CONSIDERED,

BY

A CANADIAN LAYMAN.

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The consternation caused by the falling of a shell in a populous city could not possibly exceed that arising from the first appearance of “Essays and Reviews” in the civilized world. Not only among the religious of mankind did the tempest rage, but society itself seemed about to be riven asunder by the violence of this moral hurricane. Bishops and Deacons alike looked aghast in thunder-stricken silence at the monster which had suddenly revealed itself in their very midst; venerable Presbyters shook their hoary heads and carefully perused the pages of the Apocalyps, if perchance they might find this new terror foreshadowed or explained in its mysterious pages; local preachers smiled complacently, and honestly thanked their God for the faith which screened them from its scorching influence; the lowest class of unthinking Atheists threw up their caps in exuberant delight at what they considered the triumph of their cause, and even intelligent and dignified men of all classes and creeds, forgetting for the moment their composure and self-respect, added their voices to the Babel confusion of censure, praise and terror, already deafening the ear and confounding the understanding.

The excitement was contagious:—as well expect any cur to maintain its equanimity in the presence of an exciting hunt as ask any mortal, subject to the infirmities of human nature, to look on this universal commotion unmoved. Neither was it possible for any man to take a clear, calm view of the matter while the fever still raged in his own blood; several indeed were rash enough to attempt it, but on either side, as might naturally have been expected, each appeal shewed far too much of the blind and cruel furor yet undiminished within the hearts of the respective writers. Fortunately, however, derangements in the moral atmosphere, like those of the outer world, cannot last for ever. Even now the storm has expended its giant strength, the waves are subsiding, and but for a low grumbling and occasional splash here and there we might actually begin to look upon the past as a dream of the night, and smile upon the shadows which had stricken such terror to our souls.

A celebrated historian has stated that "the best time to write the history of an event is when the actors in it are about to quit the scene;" and, in a moral sense, it appears that the attitude of the actors in the scene before us is such, according to the above conclusion, as to justify one in the attempt at taking an unprejudiced review of the path of that comet whose unexpected appearance has so deranged the equilibrium of the religious world. Not that we should have the arrogance to attempt, for one moment, to cope with the varied learning and undeniable depth of intellect displayed, not only by the authors of this celebrated work, but also by many of those who, since its appearance, have endeavoured, by the weighty influence of their learned dissertations, to uphold or trample down the peculiar views which it has been the object of the book to convey. Neither should we have been tempted by any means to raise our feeble voice among the intellectual giants who occupy the arena, but for a very trifling circumstance which caught our attention no later than yesterday.

We were quietly enjoying the fresh air among the primeval trees in the rear of our forest home when we observed a small pen rudely constructed of heavy logs, in all about three feet in height; there was no roof or covering of any kind, and a small opening cut in one side, the bottom level with the ground and not more than a foot high, answered all the purposes of a door to the roofless tenement. Misery could not ask a more wretched dwelling or crime a less secure prison. Some half-threshed oats had been thrown in, apparently intended as bedding for some of those wandering animals which another wandering tribe so religiously abhor; and in carrying this straw to its destination, much of the grain, so carelessly neglected in the threshing, lay scattered upon the ground up to the very door of this humble but tenantless abode. As we stood gazing thereon and ruminating over the various styles of dwellings in which humanity finds a quantum of happiness on earth, from the royal palace to the lonely squatter's hut, we noticed two noble, fullfledged geese, whom a rare good fortune had directed to this lucky path, following, with curved and snowy necks and red bills close upon the ground, the track so richly strewn with the delicious grain. Lost to the world around them, and totally wrapt in the enjoyment of their luxurious repast, they followed on, leaving little for the gleaners, until unwittingly they passed in at the small door of the pen, and then for the first time the thought appeared to strike them that they had wandered far from home, and that it was high time to return to their feathered brotherhood—alas for goosely ingenuity!—in a fit of absence they had entered, but how to get out seemed strangely to puzzle their reawakened faculties. In vain they raised their lordly heads above the level of the lowly walls and cackled forth their wonder and despair; the clipped wings refused to carry them over, and as for stooping to go out as they came in—in fact the thought

never struck them! They saw the clear blue sky above their heads, which were full of thoughts of liberty and lofty aspirations after freedom, but as for extricating themselves they seemed to have relinquished the idea in silent sorrow.

At this juncture we observed a little wretched gleaner in the shape of a half-fledged, miserable-looking chicken, of unhealthy appearance, following on the late course of the noble prisoners, picking up a grain here and a grain there, until it found itself at their very feet within the little enclosure. There, among the rich straw, the little bird was amply repaid for its pains, and giving a little chirp of hearty contentment—which might, indeed, have been its mode of thanking God for its plentiful repast—it turned quietly out and pursued its homeward course unobserved! And is it possible, we thought, that this little bird can, without apparent reflection of any kind, naturally hit upon a way which these superior birds have vainly been cudgelling their brains to discover. Truly, then, the veriest child may make itself useful, and to the humblest among us is there a duty assigned; and totally unequal as we are in education and other respects to those who have all their lives revelled in advantages denied to us, may we not, like this little bird, happen perchance to see, what those, to whose infinite superiority we most devoutly and willingly bow, have failed to recognize!

It has been remarked by Zimmerman that “humility is the first lesson we learn from reflection, and self-distrust the first proof we give of having obtained a knowledge of ourselves.” We earnestly trust and partly believe that our reflective faculties, such as they are, have been sufficiently exercised towards the attainment of the first lesson that they teach; and we certainly feel that want of confidence which would lead us to believe that we are not altogether deficient in self-knowledge; so that we can fully appreciate the extent to which we render ourselves liable to be classed with that numerous crowd who gain a most unenviable notoriety by their temerity in “rushing in where angels fear to tread,” when we presume to take any position, beyond that of silent listener, in the present momentous discussions. There are two advantages, however, which our isolated position may possibly command. In the first place, being removed far from the throng of theological debaters, where the ideas of each are so apt to take more or less the pervading hue of the whole, the probable absence of this tinge may, haply, lend an apparent freshness to our views; and in the second place, our total ignorance of the main characters on the stage, while it detracts from the thoroughness of our remarks, may enable us to bring to bear upon the subject a more unprejudiced mind than those, whom an intimate personal acquaintance with the principals must have placed, to a certain degree, in the position of party men. And after all, it is not the gigantic forest trees alone, with their branching greenheads and luxuriant

foliage, that lend enchantment to the beauty of the scene; do not the meek-eyed violets beneath our feet fill up, in their own place, the exquisite harmony of nature, and add a note, the want of which, however feeble, would be both felt and regretted.

The effect of "Essays and Reviews" upon the great world without we can only judge from second-hand knowledge, derived from newspaper articles and fragmentary scraps of various kinds; that produced within the limited sphere of our own observation we have carefully and, we trust, not unprofitably studied.

Among the supporters and admirers of the work, comprising the vast range from simple acquiescence to enthusiastic worship, we have met with two distinct classes, and we believe in the existence of a third. The first comprises a small number of intelligent men, generally well to do in the world, men who read much and think a little too, deficient in the poetic vitality of Religion, too intellectual to be sensual, yet too worldly to be holy, possessing the penetration to detect an error somewhere, yet lacking both the courage and ability to track the error home, a selfish class after all, who, mostly ignorant of any broad principles of philanthropy, live for themselves alone, mendicants for public admiration or even wonder, perfectly satisfied with the verdict of their little world that they are "*different* from the common herd."

In the second class, unfortunately a large one in the present day, we include the lowest type of humanity; to call them infidels would be to honour them, for that word seems to imply that they have, at least, wished or endeavoured to believe something. These men never have. Scoffer is the true designation of the class, composed principally of men of dissolute habits, full of bodily health and animal spirits, void of heart, though sometimes among their friends styled "good-hearted fellows"—earthly, sensual—men who have perhaps heard of Voltaire, and read Jack Sheppard as the noblest production of literary genius—men of no intellect, who take the same frantic pleasure in destroying or caricaturing the noblest aspirations of humanity, that chattering monkeys would experience in tearing a flower or defacing a piece of exquisite workmanship, arising, in either case, from a total inability to comprehend or appreciate the object of their senseless rage.

In the existence of the third class, a specimen of which, as we said before, we have never met, and therefrom infer its scarcity—we are led to believe, from the general idea presented to our own mind of the authors of the book in question; an idea derived and moulded altogether from the character of their writings now before us. To include them in either of the classes above specified would be to exhibit an obtuseness of mind, an obliquity of vision melancholy to contemplate, if not quite unusual to meet.

But *Eair play* is a jewel so firmly enshrined in the Briton's heart that we would warn those who recklessly vilify the names of these men, that they are fighting against themselves; for so sure as, in this great nation, any individual is unjustly debased, so sure will the reaction sooner or later set in when he shall be, to a precisely similar degree, unduly exalted. That they are men, we speak of them as a whole, of great intellectual power and superior attainments no one can doubt; and while we consider ourselves fully entitled to give an opinion or venture a suggestion as to the moral points at issue; yet to the task of criticising their various renderings or new translations proposed, we are free to confess ourselves thoroughly unequal. But the unprejudiced reader will find, in some of these men at least, something vastly superior to either intellectual power or literary attainment of any kind whatever. There is something very wonderful in the manner in which the temper of a writer will appear to breathe, as it were, from his pages; it is the spirit which appears thoroughly distinct from, and independent of the letter. Let a man, under irritating circumstances, write a letter to his friend, couched in the calmest terms and most carefully balanced words, and the chances are ten to one that his friend, if an acute observer, will detect therein his state of mind, notwithstanding his endeavours to conceal it: it is the impress of its individuality which mind must invariably leave on every material medium of expression, and which can neither be hidden nor repressed. There are, it may be, so many millions of voices in the world, yet the voice of an intimate friend will be recognised after many years of absence; and your daily companion will detect your anonymous production almost as readily as he will pick your photograph from a frame containing a thousand. You may disguise the body, but a low mind cannot conceal its vulgarity, neither a noble mind its inherent beauty; and where christian charity, that highest excellence of human nature, exists, it can not be concealed, but will bloom in every word, adorning the affectionate lines of the simple domestic letter—while softening the harshness and rounding the asperities of the coldest philosophical enquiry. It is this spirit breathing from these pages, more than all other natural and acquired superiority, which draws the unequivocal line of distinction between this and the two other classes. It must, however, be carefully borne in mind that to acknowledge the presence of this spirit among them, even in its fullest development, is by no means to commit ourselves to the support of their opinions. A right noble soul will not necessarily save its possessor from the committal of the gravest errors in judgment, and a good intention can never justify, though it must materially palliate, a fault.

Such, then, in a few words, are the distinctive characteristics of the three classes by whom the sentiments of this book are more or less thoroughly

applauded, affording a peculiar exemplification of the discordant elements that will unexpectedly mingle in every question of universal interest, where the ideal predominates over the material; for beyond all doubt the bitterest enemies of the book are incalculably nearer akin in spirit, if they only knew it, to the authors, than the staunchest friends they can point out in the first or second class enumerated: in fact, the questionable support of the second class must have been as little anticipated before, as it was thoroughly despised after it was accorded; a support clearly negative or worse than negative in all its practical results, arising from no community of feeling or principles between the authors and themselves, but simply from a natural antipathy to the class who, in all sincerity, found it their duty, not only to anathematize the work, but even in some cases, exceptional we hope, to traduce and vilify the character of the writers.

The opponents, as implied above, are embraced in one class, or apparently so; for in reality a careful analysis would here detect elements united, naturally even more antagonistic than those composing the whole three classes just described. This class, which far outnumbers all the others put together, consists of what will be understood by *the church-going* of all sects, a class comprising every degree of moral status imaginable, ranging from the very best and holiest of orthodox christians, in the highest acceptance of the terms, to those whom early educational habit, the force of custom or interested, and even base motives, have induced to adopt the same uniform and march under the same banner.

Thus, so far as our observation has gone, stand the Essayists, in the anomalous position of men enthusiastically cheered by their natural enemies, and as heartily anathematized by those who should at least have been their apologists if not their friends; either side exhibiting the not altogether unusual phenomenon of men fighting in the dark, for the interesting feature of the most violent on both sides is the fact, that very few of them have seen either the book itself or even the smallest extracts from it; but having *heard* of a doctrine, a doubt or a theory as emanating therefrom, have filled up the great blank with the suggestions of their own over-lively imaginations, and thus, having found an enemy in a windmill, attack it with genuine Quixotic valour.

Having now endeavoured to delineate the position and analyse the component elements of the combatants, we trust we may be permitted, before touching upon the essays, to make a few observations to *christian men* upon the attitude of the *christian church* in the present day—what it is and what it should be. By *christian church* we intend to denote the party classed above as the avowed opponents of the Essayists; but the words *christian men*, designating thereby those to whom we would now address ourselves, we use in a far more comprehensive sense; embracing all those

who love the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the express image of His person, in sincerity and truth: all those who, unable, from any reason, to accept the miraculous identity of Father and Son, nevertheless love and honour the character of Christ as portrayed in the holy Scriptures: all those who, whether they have accepted Christ or not, whether they have heard of Christ or not, yet love the human family, and thereby, knowingly or unknowingly, honour Christ by exacting that which was the chief ornament of His nature: all those who feel within their hearts, however dim the ray, however obscured by lengthened years of ignorance, sin or crime, the feeblest yearning after good, thereby honouring Him who came upon earth to call not the Righteous, but Sinners to repentance: all, in fact, upon the face of the whole earth, except, if such there be, the haters of mankind, the hopelessly abandoned, the irretrievably depraved.

We are fallen upon wondrous days! The human intellect, flushed with the triumphs of the last half century, is running riot in the earth. Expectation mute fills every countenance, and "what wonder next?" hangs upon the threshold of every lip. While the christian church alone, like a woman benighted in the wilderness, starts at the sound of her own voice, trembling at the harmless winds as they whistle through the branches above her head, fearing to advance lest she may stumble into the pit, and dreading to retreat lest some greater evil may befall her, she draws her torn garments more closely around her and, shivering through the long hours of the night, seems, denuded of her Faith and shorn of her strength, to have lost all likeness to her former self, but her indefinite longing after morning light. Alas for her dignity, it is gone! alas for her honour, it is levelled in the dust! Where is the spirit which animated her youth? the Faith which cried of old, "Thy word is a lantern unto my feet and a light unto my path." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death I will fear no evil for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Is it not high time to shake off this lethargy? "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, shake thyself from the dust, arise and sit down;" "Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, oh captive daughter of Zion—put on thy beautiful garments," and shew thyself once more the light and the glory of the earth and not its Tyrant or its slave!

It would appear that the causes of disunion among men, whom a similarity, if not identity, of principles should have drawn together, are twofold: first, the utter impossibility of expressing ideas, so exquisitely fine as all spiritual Truths must necessarily be, in words which shall present them with precisely the same sense to every ear; second, the universal clearness with which words can be applied to all material forms or tangible ceremonies; from which it happens that it is a similarity of outward form,

altogether unaffected by the possible total dissimilarity of inward spirit, that draws men into brotherhoods as friends and unites the most discordant spirits in bands of apparent harmony and love.

Take party spirit, for instance, especially such as builds itself upon the foundation of religious belief, and compare the coarse violence of its practical development with the meekness of the faith, and the loving nature of the spirit, by which it believes itself to be inspired, and there you will have one of the most common and clearly evident examples of this phenomenon of invisible antagonistic spirits, unnaturally, and to all appearance inseparably, bound together by the iron bands of outward form, the worthless shibboleth of a party creed. They repeat together, in all sincerity, the articles of the same Faith, but alas day and night are not more dissimilar than the ideas conveyed to the mind of each by these useless vehicles. The horrible amazement of Zelica, as the prophet unveiled to her his hideous lineaments, was not more real or sincere than would be that of these friends so fondly linked together, could they, but for one moment, look into the hearts of one another, and, unveiling the idol enshrined within the inner temple of each, see clearly the moral features of that Deity they have so long considered the counterpart of their own. What unheard of wonders would such a revelation occasion! Iron bands would snap asunder and creeds lose their significance; sworn friends would find themselves unable longer to walk in the same path together; deadly enemies would discover in each other the dearest friends, and what an accession of strength would accrue to the worshippers of God when, the bonds of outward form cast to the four winds, they could stand together a phalanx indivisible—indissoluble—united by the same inner Faith, the same living hope, the universal spirit of Charity and Love. And is it altogether vain to anticipate a consummation so desirable? What other words than these—Charity and Love—so clearly, so unmistakably indicate the spirit which, in time, can draw all men in one? The dying criminal still believes in them. The multitude of the heathen dimly behold and obscurely worship them. The infidel host, despising the outward form, unwittingly adore them. And who of the christian church, who has sincerely studied the life, the words, and above all, the spirit of his Divine Master, will dare to deny that His mission upon earth was to declare these words, to expound this doctrine, to man. Hell is shadowed forth, the atonement hinted at, the Sacraments spoken of, by the great Example, but His whole life, from His first appearance to His final ascension, was a ceaseless, unremitting exposition, by word and deed, of the Heaven-born, Eternal doctrine of Charity and Love.

“Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” were the first dawning words of light which, in the world’s infancy, bore witness to the promised day. “Peace on earth, good

will to man," was the angelic song which heralded in the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. "Love your enemies," and again, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy strength and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself; *on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*" Such were the astounding announcements that, in the noontide splendour of that glorious day, dazzled the eyes of the astonished earth. And when that beautiful and never-to-be-forgotten Sun had set at last, what were the voices of the night, speaking from the multitudinous host of stars that defied the threatening darkness! "Continue ye in my love," "Let Love be without dissimulation," "By Love serve one another," "The fruit of the spirit is Love," "Let Brotherly love continue," "Love is of God," "God is love," "We ought to love one another," "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him," "There is no fear in love, perfect love casteth out fear," "Who loveth God loveth his brother," "Love the brotherhood," "Love is the fulfilment of the law." And do not these words strike a respondent chord in every heart? do they not recommend themselves to the conscience of every man? Does not the inmost heart of the great Earth rejoice at the sound, acknowledging them as the Truth, and that great Truth which yet shall make her free?

We are not of those who expect or wish for immediate changes in this respect. Changes, the result of long reflection and cool conviction, are more steady and permanent than such as arise from a sudden impulse, however generous. Years must necessarily elapse before men begin in earnest to disregard the outer, in favour of the inner similarity; but we believe that a tendency in this direction is becoming apparent, and moreover, that such a change must not only commence, but materially advance, before the christian church can recover her strength and take that position in the world which is not only her privilege, but her right. Let the pre-eminence of the inner life over the outward form be once generally comprehended and universally admitted, and soon old things shall pass away, all things shall become new—for it is the inability of the church to recognize this truth that has cost her the loss of many of her noblest sons and most generous supporters. Take, for instance, the poet Shelley, whom the christian church has stigmatized as an infidel and an Atheist. Had he looked to the inner life of the church and the church to the inner life of the poet, each would have seen his own likeness reflected in the features of the other. It is reported of him that he hated Christ, whereas in truth he hated only the ridiculous caricature, the grinning mockery of the reality, which, either from his own obtuseness or from a flaw existing somewhere, the word Christ presented to his mental vision. But is it either the letters forming that word we worship, or even the sound pertaining to those let-

ters? Or is it not rather the incarnation of Truth and Holiness and Love which that group of letters is intended to represent? That Holiness, Truth and Love Shelley worshipped more sincerely than the generality of professing christians. The Falsehood and the Vengeance and the Hate which, from perhaps mental obliquity of vision, the same group presented to his mind, the church, with him, deprecates and abhors. They love the same, they hate the same, the conditions required for eternal friendship; and yet they part as enemies the most irreconcilable, simply because they speak in different tongues and do not comprehend one another!

How quickly would all men be drawn together in one were all controversial doctrines dispensed with and the main truth and living fire of Scripture alone referred to. And why should doctrinal points, which Christ himself invariably kept in the background, if He did not ignore them altogether, be insisted upon and pressed into the service of a church they tend to shatter and destroy? The very fact itself of two sincere and good men finding it necessary to dispute concerning a given doctrine, is, to our mind, the most incontestible evidence that the doctrine is of little or no consequence; otherwise we directly accuse our God of laying a trap for our souls by giving us the Word of Life in riddles, an alternative too dreadful to think of for a moment.

Let men write or talk for ever about the nature or definition of Inspiration, it is but spilt ink and wasted time—far better give it up for ever. No two wranglers have the same idea presented to their minds by the word, and the controversy is doomed invariably to end in nothing but mutual distrust and jealousy between the combatants. We all know that Inspiration exists. There is a stream of communication between us and the Eternal carried on, probably, by what is called the conscience. And there are living ideas of universal application, though we cannot embody them in words of a meaning as universal. The words, "Love is the fulfilment of the law," are to us words of living fire, because our conscience, which, within us as within every man, if not the very spirit of God, is at least the medium of communion with Him, acknowledges them as genuine; and if any man tell us he cannot receive them as such, we believe that it is not because his conscience, which is identical with our own, does not recognize the truth which ours discerned embodied therein, but because the words have failed to convey the same idea to his mind. Our duty, then, remains, to discover what other words may become the vehicles of our ideas to him; and then, though literally we subscribe dissimilar creeds, we spiritually adore the same God.

Under this view of conscience every man is, to a certain extent, inspired. We can receive a spiritual Truth by inspiration alone—flesh and blood can not reveal it to us. By our consciences we are internally connected with

the Eternal, and these, if fairly treated, are the supreme arbitrators which shall stand before us in the end, and under whose accusings or excusings we shall justify the Great Judge in our final acquittal or condemnation.

A universal appreciation of the preëminence of spiritual similarity above the formal once established, what, then, would be the attitude of the christian church which we left trembling in the desert at the sound of the rustling leaves? Quickly she would arise and put on her beautiful garments, and shake herself from the dust, and loose the bands of her neck, and, straining through the Egyptian darkness for a ray of light, once more we should hear her gentle voice of Faith—"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death I will fear no evil for thou art with me thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The discoveries of astronomy or the revelations of geology would then no longer terrify her; nay she would not only willingly endure, but heartily invite inquiry. "Search me and try me," she would cry, "our God is Love and Truth, and all your revelations will redound to His honour and His praise. Search, search out the Scripture, explode its chronology and condemn its history if you may. Upon no such sandy foundation have I planted my feet. Behold I am rooted in Love and Charity, and all your delving will but fructify the soil. You could not, if you would, destroy me, for I know in whom I have trusted. Look on my bridal robe and know the Bridegroom is at hand. Henceforth I am beyond all mortal power, and for the powers of darkness, resting in the Love of Christ, in His name I pity and defy them!"

In Dr. Temple's essay, entitled "The Education of the World," there appears to be but little to excite the fears of the most strictly orthodox, except it be the companionship in which it appears. Undoubtedly as it at present stands it seems to occupy the position of a prefatory chapter to the succeeding essays, and, by this introductory character alone, to implicate its author in those views and theories afterwards propounded, but which nothing in his own essay could lead us to believe he wished to favour or advocate in any way.

Taken alone, it is an ingenious and successful attempt to save the Holy Scriptures from the alarming charge, so often preferred against them by infidel writers, of revealing, in its two great divisions of the old and new Testament, the Eternal God, who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, in a twofold and even contradictory character. Orthodox christianity owes a debt of gratitude to the man who could effectively ward off so serious a homethrust, and the learned doctor, in his admirable

essay, has handled the subject ably and well. He has shown that a wise and earnest earthly parent, having, during a range of many years, the same unchangeable purposes in view, regarding his duty in the education of his child, will, nevertheless, in carrying these purposes into practice, change his order or method of procedure so as to adapt them, as his wisdom may dictate, to the capacity and mental condition of the child as he passes through the various stages of infancy, youth and manhood. This training as it is maintained in a paragraph which contains the pith of the whole argument, "has three stages. In childhood we are subject to positive rules which we cannot understand but are bound implicitly to obey. In youth we are subject to the influence of example, and soon break loose from all rules, unless illustrated and enforced by the higher teaching which example imparts. In manhood we are comparatively free from external restraints, and, if we are to learn, must be our own instructors. First come rules, then example, then principles. First comes the Law, then the Son of Man, then the gift of the Spirit. The World was once a child under tutors and governors until the Time appointed by the Father. Then, when the fit season had arrived, the Example to which all ages should turn was sent to teach men what they ought to be. Then the human race was left to itself to be guided by the teachings of the spirit within." This idea throws a clearer light upon the narratives contained in the earlier part of the old Testament history; and accounts, in no inconsiderable degree, for the impression often left upon the mind when studying the characters portrayed in them, that we have been reading of the acts and sayings of full-grown children rather than those of actual men. Among the many narratives which partake of this childish character we might especially note the temptation of Eve and her subsequent concealment and excuses—the building of Babel to escape from God—the conduct of Jacob and Esau—the trickery of Laban—Joseph's many-coloured coat and the jealousy it excited among his brethren—their manner of revenge—the cup in the sack's mouth, and numerous others of the same kind; not to detract, by any means, from the beauty and simplicity of the narratives, but merely to draw the attention to the growth of the human mind since that time, and to point out the fact that similar accounts given, respecting our present race of men, would appear both preposterous and absurd. It is hard, if not impossible, to divest our minds of the effect of their earliest impressions; and these narratives which have been placed before us from our infancy, and which, by their innate beauty, delighted and charmed our childhood, even to our mature judgment appear natural, because we connect them with a generation and time long gone by. But to picture the idea of the Prime Minister of England hitting upon the notion of putting a silver spoon into the pocket of a foreign ambassador, in order to frame an excuse for

illegally detaining him at his house, is quite impossible to the understanding of the present day, in civilized countries at least. Nevertheless, many of these stories, literally so irreconcilable with the present state of society, seem to have a shadowy and spiritual application throughout all ages; for although no set of grown men, outside the walls of a lunatic asylum, will now attempt to bring together bricks and mortar to build a tower whose top shall reach into the Heavens, yet in every generation there are spiritual Babels, commenced by men who, as prodigal sons, would live independent of their Father; and the unfinished condition of these towers is often owing to a spiritual confusion of ideas not unlike the material confounding of tongues which scattered the builders on the plains of Shinar. And this will be the system of interpretation left to those who reject the theory of Dr. Temple; for if the notion of the world's growth is discarded the early Scriptures become unmeaning, unless they be supposed to carry a deep and hidden spiritual truth beyond all that is obvious upon the surface, or all that the words, in a literal sense, are able to convey. But it is evident that by those, to whom they were originally addressed, the earliest of the old Testament writings were taken in their literal sense alone; and it is the existence of this double life, above all else, that indelibly stamps their moral teachings with the evidence of their divine origin, written not for time but for eternity, not for an age but for a succession of ages, addressed to the infant world as the clearest rule of its guidance yet carrying within a power of development capable of adapting itself to that of the growing man; so that in every stage of existence the same words revealed a new meaning precisely adapted to, and essentially required by the wants of the time. There is scarcely a narrative or command in the old Testament to which this spiritual application to the present age cannot be clearly traced, though thoroughly unsuspected at the time of their first delivery to the world.

While Dr. Temple holds the revelations of God for the education of the World to have been given directly through the medium of the Jewish people, he still professes to believe that "other nations, meanwhile, had a training parallel to and contemporaneous with theirs. The natural Religions—shadows projected by the spiritual light within shining on the dark problems without—were all, in reality, systems of law given also by God, though not given by revelation but by the working of nature, and, consequently, so distorted and adulterated that, in lapse of time, the divine element in them had almost perished."

It is the appearance of passages of this kind, wherein a steady faith in the peculiar inspiration of the oracles of the Jewish literature,—in contradistinction to the simple suggestions of nature, emanating from the same eternal spirit, which threw a feeble light into the darkness of the gentile

world,—is directly implied ; it is the appearance of such passages and the portraiture they afford of the mental condition and spiritual faith of the author, that renders the position which he holds with regard to his brother essayists particularly unaccountable indeed. He, as the others individually, claims to be judged on the merits of his own work alone and disavows all “concert or comparison with” the rest ; but to believe that he entered the same vessel with them and took the prominent place at the figure-head in which we find him, without knowing or caring for the aims or objects of his associates would imply an imputation of bad taste and want of judgment that the perusal of his writings would never warrant ; whereas to suppose that this place was allotted to him as forming the connecting link between the old orthodoxy and the new interpretations about to be ushered in, would be either to imply that, while he admitted the necessity of change in the former, his conscience refused to go the whole lengths demanded by the latter, and therefore he had no business there at all, or worse still, that adopting, in their fullest sense, the extreme views of his associates, he wilfully refrained from giving utterance to opinions of a startling nature so as gradually to initiate the incautious reader by slow gradations into the inner mysteries of this new development of the christian faith—a reading of the riddle which would certainly throw a severer accusation upon his sincerity and truth than the spirit displayed in his excellent essay would appear at all to justify. In fact, holding the belief that he confessedly does with regard to inspiration and revelation, the question, what induced him to take the position in which he stands, is one that can be answered only by himself, and one that lies altogether between his conscience and his God.

In attempting to illustrate the light “given by God but not by inspiration,” and especially where, in the following words, he endeavours to point out a truth revealed by that light which the rays of the christian sun have failed to illuminate, he is signally led astray by that inability, before alluded to, of such words as “courage” and “patriotism” to designate a universal idea. “But except through such general appeals to natural feeling it would be difficult to prove from the new Testament that cowardice was not only disgraceful but sinful and that love of our country was an exalted duty of humanity. That lesson our consciences have learnt from the teachings of ancient Rome.”

We question very much if ancient Rome had any notion at all of either the nature or beauty of true courage or of the extreme foulness of its opposite, cowardice—the words then, as now, meant all things and everything. We maintain that the only quality deserving the name of courage must be derived from a lifelong application of, and subjection to, the Scriptural laws of universal Love, which implies self-renunciation—which is

courage and the only true courage in existence. As for the every day hero courage that is lauded to the skies, though most useful, it is nothing but an arrant imposter, a contemptible counterfeit of the truth, no more to be compared to the great reality than a rushlight to the sun of heaven. Look on the hero of a thousand battles, him, who has sought the "bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth" and never knew what the sensation of fear was, when the balls were whistling by his ears and his comrades falling in hundreds on his right hand and on his left. See how boldly he rides on defying Death to his very face or trampling him beneath his charger's feet. Here is courage to satisfy the most sceptical, here is undoubtedly the ring of the true metal. Let him come down from his snorting steed—he who has resolutely faced a thousand deaths will not surely shrink from facing one! See yonder single ray proceeding from the window of that solitary hut; within, upon a couch of straw, in the delirium of agonising fever, that wretched, attenuated figure throws his restless arms aloft and asks for "Death as for a boon." Will not the warrior sympathise with this brother-scorner of the dreaded one? Over his couch hangs the palefaced Minister whose eyes have not known sleep nor his body rest for two long days and weary nights, how lovingly he soothes the sufferer and holds, with trembling hands, the cup of cold water to the poor, parched lips. Go, mighty conqueror, change places for one hour. His quiet duties will nerve and rest your weary arm for further triumph; and your exhilarating charge in the fresh field will renovate his jaded faculties. Both are afraid! His is the God of the battlefield and there sustains him, and his the God of the sick chamber without its walls forsaking him!! Unrobe, then, this miserable phantom of true courage and what do we find? if not an actual Vice arrayed in Virtue's garments, at best an ignorant callousness, a stupid inability to recognise or appreciate danger, counterfeiting the righteous man's true estimate of it. Self-renunciation—the lesson inculcated by the spirit of the whole Scripture writings, the lesson that Christ was sent into the earth to exemplify, the lesson that every man is born into the world to learn, is courage, true courage and the only courage. Custom will reconcile a man to the appearance of any particular danger. Few men on earth have shewn a high degree of courage, none has displayed it in perfection save one—the great Example—Christ, the Son of God!

And what is patriotism, this other great lesson that we are sent to ancient Rome to learn? In its very best and purest sense it is but the third or fourth step in that great ladder whose summit, like that in Jacob's dream, rests in the Heavens, on the one great Scriptural truth of universal Love. And in its commonplace sense, like courage, a mockery, a delusion and a snare—a phantom conjured up at the beck of politicians and statesmen, fit alike to be used to the establishment of a nation, or abused to its destruc-

tion ; a creature of the imagination produced alike by the noblest and by the lowest instincts of our nature.

Nevertheless, as the Hebrew lamb, without spot and blemish, prefigured the Holiness to be revealed ; so may the "courage" of Rome, the "beauty worship" of Greece and the "poetic aspirations" of Asia have prefigured alike the self-denial, the intense spiritual loveliness and the essential poetry belonging to that Holiness, and of which they were the material symbols shadowing forth the spiritual realities about to be revealed in Christ. Before Christ appeared no man knew what God is ; and from Him alone have we received the spirit, by the teachings of which the human creature is transformed into the noblest work of God, not only an honest man, for the word honest has become earth-tainted in its meaning, but a christian gentleman, in whom we find true holiness, true courage, true meekness, true gentleness, and often true poetry combined—in one word, perfect self-renunciation or Love.

Throughout the essay the resemblance between the successive ages of the world and those of the individual man, is carefully and accurately traced ; and the difficulty of reconciling the tone of the early, with that of the later Scriptural writings thereby obviated. No man will rise from the perusal of this essay without an inward feeling of pleasurable satisfaction, the intellectual as well as the spiritual life has received fresh impetus ; in every line the devotion of the christian spirit is apparent. Such passages as this are well worthy the attention of all : "Among all the vices which it is necessary to subdue in order to build up the human character, there is none to be compared, in strength or in virulence, with that of Impurity. It can outlive and kill a thousand virtues ; it can corrupt the most generous heart ; it can madden the soberest intellect ; it can debase the loftiest imagination. But besides being so poisonous in character, it is, above all others, most difficult to conquer ; and the people whose extraordinary toughness of nature has enabled it to outlive Egyptian Pharaohs, and Assyrian Kings, and Roman Cæsars, and Mussulman Caliphs, was well matched against a power of evil, which has battled with the human spirit ever since the creation and has inflicted, and may yet inflict, more deadly blows than any other power we know of."

The following is another of the passages which leads us to believe that the author must surely have regretted the accident which threw him into connection with some of his fellow-essayists : "But He (Christ) came in the fulness of time for which all history had been preparing, and to which all history since has been looking back. Hence the first and the largest place in the new Testament is assigned to His life four times told. This life we emphatically call the Gospel. If there is little herein to be technically called doctrine, yet here is the fountain of all inspiration. There is

no christian who would not rather part with all the rest of the Bible than with these four books. There is no part of God's Word which the religious man more instinctively remembers. The Sermon on the Mount, the Parables, the Miracles, the Last Supper, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Cross of Calvary—these are the companions alike of infancy and old age; simple enough to be read with awe and wonder by the one; profound enough to open new depths of wisdom to the fullest experience of the other." And again, when he says that "we read the new Testament, not to find there forms of devotion for there are few to be found, nor laws of church government for there are hardly any, nor creeds for there are none, nor doctrines logically stated," &c., &c., he seems to recognise fully the preëminence and grandeur of the spiritual principle of Charity, before whose majestic presence forms, creeds and doctrines sink into comparative insignificance or contempt. Would that the multitude of the sects could be brought to look upon their contentions in the light of these ideas; not to attempt uniformity of creed or church government which would be useless, even if attainable, but to assign to them their legitimate positions, as the outward trappings and ornamental decorations of the inner spirit of Charity. It is the formal christian, ignorant of the true essence of his faith, and not the outspoken enemy, who has exhibited to the world that material caricature of christianity, which popular novelists justly ridicule and infidel writers sarcastically deride.

There are but two passages in this essay which could have been seized upon, with any shew of justice, by those whose object it has been to discover an infidel tendency concealed within it; and these, taken in the author's sense, simply propose theories, the truth of which has long been acknowledged by the vanguard of the christian church. In the first of these it is stated that "we can acknowledge the great value of the forms in which the first ages of the church defined the truth and yet refuse to be bound by them; we can use them and yet endeavour to go beyond them, just as they also went beyond the legacy which was left them by the Apostles."

Truth, indeed, is one indivisible and unchangeable for ever; but the form by which that truth is to be carried into the system of the church must depend upon the assimilating powers of the patient at the time; even so the elementary nutritious atoms of food are one and the same, yet they are administered to the babe in the form of milk and to the grown man as meat, custom, too, and habit making a certain form of diet most suitable; and of such importance is this form that food may become even poisonous if administered in any but that adapted to the age and habits of the individual: yet the form can never rank with the essential truth in importance. There are certain articles of diet peculiarly suited to the means of various classes

of men, and these, at length, custom renders necessary, so that each class has its arbitrary rules which may not be infringed upon with impunity. The same rules obtain respecting spiritual food—there are certain forms adapted to certain classes, and while it is barely possible for a highly cultivated intellect to present truth in a garb acceptable to the vulgar mind, it is utterly impossible for a downright vulgar mind to present even the noblest truths in a form suited to the tastes of the refined. The learned man, the publican and the fisherman, were chosen by our Lord as His Apostles, that His truth might be properly presented to every class of mind; and the church which ignores this principle is shorn of half its strength. What the power of our national church might be with such a system as the Wesleyan acting as an auxiliary, as it should have been, no man can calculate. Custom, too, is as stern and unrelenting here as in the case of bodily nourishment. Men die in the church in which they are born. A catholic begets a catholic, an episcopalian an episcopalian, a presbyterian a presbyterian, as naturally as a Negro begets a black child; and he who would convert a man to his own sect from another acts about as rashly as would a hardy Highlander who would insist upon oatmeal porridge as the only wholesome diet for the Lord Mayor of London.

How many there are who recognise the majestic beauty of the Scriptures! How few, alas, who duly appreciate their exquisite simplicity! When will men be brought to see that there is one great, simple and sublime truth revealed in the whole Bible. Like the pillar of cloud and fire it stands above the hill of Calvary casting its shadows backward and its intense light forward, by light and shadow challenging the attention of the earlier, and the worship of the latter ages. The Law foreshadowed it; the prophets, themselves stumbling in the dark, pointed to it, the Son of God revealed it; the one, the everlasting truth permeating every page of Holy Writ with its life-dispensing power, the simple Law of Love, eternal, universal, infinite! *Love, in its highest sense, is the state of the soul in perfect moral and spiritual health, in which alone it is fully reconciled to its Father;* and this is the great leading and essential truth which the Bible reveals in its thousand pages. And does the Bible contain no more than this? Certainly, much every way. A book which defined the conditions of bodily health and revelled in descriptions of its happy state, but went no further, would furnish but poor consolation to the sick and suffering. But this in a certain sense stands preëminent as the essential truth revealed, all the rest is but a system of medical forms adapted to man's various constitutions, divinely given, to bring every soul into this state of bliss. Now mark the difference. The first truth is essential as it is universal; the second, that is the system of forms and minor truths, though we have the fullest faith in, and it is always our duty to offer, we have no right to insist upon,

neither is truth in them indispensable, they are but means to an end, and a baseless parable may lead to the greatest truth. The soul once seeing the true nature of health may, in some cases, be the best judge of its own cure. The wise physician in appointing the diet of his patient will, though an exceptional case, alter the regimen if any particular article named seem nauseous to the irritated stomach. There are instincts in every man's soul which must be respected. Among the wandering Indian tribes we find mighty cures that the legal physician knows nothing of. "Lord, we saw one casting out devils in thy name and we forbade him *because he followed not with us.*" "Forbid him not." Can anything be more plain? "He casts out Sin, that is my work and the work of my servants; I have given you a way, but and if he chooses another way and yet he casts it out, forbid him not: The health is all the means of obtaining it comparatively nothing."

Let us take care then lest we take the cause for the effect. Spiritual like physical health, is a state of being, and the system of formulæ so often confounded with it is but a way to obtain it; and while we have the fullest faith in those legal means devised, nevertheless we acknowledge the existence of morbid and abnormal conditions; and if our individual experience should declare to us that we could arrive at that state by casting pebbles into the sea rather than by prayer and fasting, then would such pebble-casting become our creed and duty as well as our privilege and delight.

The true office, then, of a minister of God is, firstly, to declare to a blind world the nature and beauty of health; secondly, to insist upon its absolute necessity as the only alternative to spiritual death; and, thirdly, to point out and approve, but never to insist upon, the orthodox means of cure. One man's medicine is another man's poison, and those who insist upon certain Scriptural means as a specific for the cure of every form of disease, are but ignorant impostors who often turn the ridicule of the world upon the genuine practitioner as well as upon themselves.

In the second passage before referred to, it is stated that "the principle of private judgment puts conscience between us and the Bible, making conscience the supreme interpreter, whom it may be a duty to enlighten but never can be a duty to disobey."

This theory, which has caused some wonder as proceeding from the mouth of a Church-of-England clergyman, is as old as the Reformation at least; it is nothing but the old bone of contention between the Catholic and Protestant sections of the christian church; the former of whom, holding the same clear views of the great first Truth as the latter, nevertheless not only maintains the forms prescribed in Scripture as the absolute and only available means of cure, but, further, insists upon the necessity of

their being wrapped in the same tinsel and tinged with the same colouring which recommended them to the admiring gaze of the infant world. The latter section ignore the tinsel and colouring as only fit for children, and pretend, moreover, as the words quoted imply, to have discovered, by an inner light, a higher application of the forms themselves more suited to the advancing years of the world. Both Physicians of excellent reputation, though personally, we regret to say it, not the best of friends.

Let us conclude our remarks upon this essay by endorsing this noble sentiment which it contains: "He is guilty of high treason against the faith who fears the result of any investigation, whether philosophical or scientific or historical." Prove the world's years to be counted by millions and man to have existed from everlasting, uproot old theories and establish new—all Truth, clearly demonstrated, we are ready to accept. But it can not alter our position; we need no Revelation from above to tell us these things; in a spiritual sense they are of no importance. Let science settle them as she will, her decision cannot affect the one grand Truth revealed in Holy Writ, that it is the duty of our lives and the highest aim of our existence such as God is so to be, and that God is Love.

If we have found a difficulty in accounting for Dr. Temple's place among the Essayists, a similar difficulty meets us again in accounting for the position which some of the others occupy, not only within the pale of the Church of England, but amongst the foremost ranks of her doctors and teachers.

A national christian church, as we understand the institution, implies a certain and fixed interpretation of christian truths, embodied in a given code of forms which those, to whom the task has been assigned by the State, consider to be the best adapted to convey to the congregation the doctrines they are intended to declare. It is very possible to conceive a national church established upon a broader basis in which the one essential truth of Revelation alone being named, the ministers might have full liberty left them to expound and interpret the doctrinal matter of Scripture as their inclination or learning might dictate, although such a church would be altogether impracticable in the present day because men are not prepared for it. But the national church of England is no such church as this. She has not separated the fundamental Truth of christianity from the doctrines which direct the soul to its attainment; but, on the contrary, has carefully embodied these doctrines in precise and unmistakable forms, and thus embodied has exalted them to the first rank among revelations, demanding from her priests, before admitting them into her sanctuary, a hearty and solemn subscription to each and all of them. In sincerity the church could not have acted otherwise. Having the fullest faith in the divine inspirations of her own doctrines and an inborn horror of everything

in the shape of heresy and innovation, these means alone were left her to fortify her position and defend herself alike against unwarrantable intrusion or inimical attack. Thus secure from her enemies without, and most jealous in the admission of her priesthood, she never dreamt of the possibility of any hostile demonstration from within; and considering her checks and guards, such an occurrence should have been, indeed, impossible.

Beyond all contradiction the doctrinal views of the majority of the essayists are not those of the church of England. To what degree they have rendered themselves amenable to the laws of that church is beside the question. In the eyes of the world they stand inexcusable, morally convicted of fraudulently retaining a position in that church to which they have forfeited the right. The alleged advance in the spirituality and rationality of their ideas has nothing to do with the matter. They may be heretically false or they may be supernaturally true, but they distinctly are not those of the church of England. We charitably trust that, at the time of their ordination, they faithfully held the doctrines of that church. Let us concede that since that time their views have materially changed, as by their own shewing they must, that their souls grasped what they considered broader truths than were dreamt of in the philosophy of the mother church, and full of their spirit they burned to disclose them to the world. In such a case one course, and only one, remained open to honest men, that adopted by Luther when labouring under somewhat similar impressions. He boldly renounced the church he could no longer faithfully serve, and then delivered his famous theses to the world, that it might be the judge between them. It is vain to assert that their theories are but the more mature development of the formularies of their church, for there is no dissenting church in the land whose doctrines do not agree more closely with the faith of the English church than do those of the Essayists given to the world in these remarkable pages. Leaving these gentlemen to settle this matter, each with his own conscience, we will glance at the essay of Dr. Williams purporting to be a review of the Biblical researches of Baron Bunsen.

That this essay is intended as a defence of christianity, in its widest sense, none but the most prejudiced can doubt. Unfortunately, however, the prejudiced form a very large portion of the community; and it is almost impossible for one whose mind "the cold shades of unbelief have never for an instant darkened," to understand the spirit which animates those who have carried on a spiritual warfare with Doubt and Despair from the earliest dawn of their intellects. To him they appear, indeed, to be fighting in earnest and striking their deathblows most vigorously, but the enemy is invisible. To him they appear as madmen beating the air; yet charity demands that the possible existence of the invisible enemies be conceded; to those who behold them they possess a fearful reality, and if in

their endeavour to annihilate them they recklessly wound some of the most cherished articles of our Faith, let us at least remember that this struggle is one of Life or Death, and fought with the instinctive consciousness that one of the combatants must fall, and fall for ever.

We can fully sympathise with the writer of the second essay when he states that "if we had dreamed of our nearest kindred in irreconcilable combat, and felt anguish at the thought of opposing either, it could be no greater relief to awake, and find them at concord, than it would be to some minds to find the antagonism between Nature and Revelation vanishing in a wider grasp and deeper perception of the one or in a better-balanced statement of the other." To save christianity by the destruction of this antagonism, real or apparent, is his object, and the means to that end adopted by him is the eradication of the prophetic and miraculous element, as generally understood, from the body of the Scriptures.

Innumerable scientific minds of the first class have found it impossible to reconcile a belief in miraculous intervention of any kind with their ideas of the Eternal God; and it has been, sometimes attempted to establish as a corollary, the position, that a belief in miracle is the especial indication of a weak or at least an unscientific mind. Whether this be so or not we have no hesitation in stating that, while we heartily sympathise with those to whom this difficulty has appeared insurmountable, we have never met with that difficulty ourselves; doubts we have had, and many too, but this has never been among them. This particular difficulty would often appear to arise from a secret tendency within the soul to Pantheism; a tendency to invest the created with the dignity and glory of the Creator, considering the laws of nature as coexistent with the Eternal spirit of the universe. To a mind thus ordered an infringement, or alteration, or suspension of such laws would present an object insurmountable, would, in fact, appear a palpable absurdity; and therefore to such a mind a belief in miracle, or the popular notion of prophecy, might be inadmissible.

To our mind the Eternal has always appeared as the great first cause, yet as much an individual spirit as that which we recognise within us as self. With Him nothing is coexistent except His own attributes which form His individuality—Love, holiness, truth, justice, wisdom, mercy, power, &c., &c. In His wisdom and power He created the material world and gave to created matter such a complicated, yet exquisitely-balanced, code of laws that the wonderful and beautiful workings of nature, seeming, as it was, a true reflection of the divine spirit and being a step nearer to our humanity, were by it mistaken for the great original of whose person they were the express material, as Christ was the express spiritual image.

The laws of nature, then, are not necessary to, nor inherent in matter. We can fancy matter first created in the unbounded void, dead to all animat-

ing law. For this the eternal prepared a system of laws intimately depending the one upon the other, in such exquisite harmony that the study of them has delighted the intellect of the world for thousands of years, and may, probably, furnish fresh materials of delight and adoration to millions more, if not to all eternity. But a solitary law, the attraction of atoms for instance, is no more necessary to matter than the cog cut in the wheel of a watch is necessary to brass; neither is there any more wisdom displayed, but power only, in the selection of this law in an isolated sense, than there is in the cutting of the cog alluded to, taken apart from the place assigned to it in the mechanism of the watch. Repulsion, or some law we are ignorant of, might have taken the place of attraction, to accommodate themselves to which all other laws must have been so altered as it is impossible for the human understanding to conceive. Each isolated law then displays the power of God; the perfection and beauty of their adaptation to one another and to the whole universe, His wisdom, and His mercy, and His love. So that in the finished and perfect piece of mechanism called nature we have the handiwork of the Eternal, conceived, created, and continually animated by Him. And considering that it is by the perpetual present will of the Creator, acting through these laws, that the balance of nature is maintained, a miracle becomes not so much an active interference with, as a passive and momentary relaxation of an existent law. Rest and not action is conveyed in the idea; and the greatest proof of the presence of Him who animates the law is, to the majority of men, the suspension at will of the power of that law, or in other words, a so-called miracle.

Let us take the son of any carpenter of our acquaintance, or in our neighbourhood, and ask our own minds what amount of evidence they would require to satisfy them that he was correct in stating himself to be the incarnation of the Deity. We should demand in that man the recognition and display, in their fullest perfection, of all the attributes of God—Love, Holiness, Truth, Justice, Wisdom, Mercy, and also Power.

Convict him of one envious act, one impure thought, one solitary falsehood, however justified, one unjust demand, one foolish expectation, one unmerciful judgment, or the least inability to perform anything not contrary to the essential attributes of his nature; any one of these, independent of the rest, would stamp him as an imposter for ever. All but the last of these must be discovered in the daily life, and must there appear before faith in him can be demanded as a right; the last can be displayed by miracle alone, by his suspending at will the laws which he professes himself to have conceived and still to continue in active operation; for, although his power is more fully shewn in the springing up of the grass beneath our feet than in the raising of the dead, yet it is recognized rather in the suspension than in the continuance, just as, to use an Hibernianism, one living

besides the Falls of Niagara for years will never hear them till they cease. The eye and the ear are so satiated with the wonderful in nature that it is the suspension of the wondrous that is most wonderful.

Seeing then all the first in their perfection, many intellectual men, perhaps, would be satisfied to concede the possession of the last without requiring its display, but the majority would not be satisfied. To the ignorant mind the evidence of the last, as material, would supercede that of all the rest put together which are spiritual, and therefore to such minds less tangible. And for this reason a display of miracles appears to us as necessary to God's justice before he could call upon the multitude to believe in Christ as himself. In fact, every attribute must be made evident before every class of mind can be convinced.

In the miracles then of Christ we hold the fullest faith, which no arguments as to their improbability can ever shake, because they appear to us an actual necessity to the majority; and in the reality of those contained in the Old Testament we tacitly acquiesce, seeing no reason for taking them in other than their plainest sense. But to insist upon the reception of either in their material sense, by minds which candidly confess their utter inability to bear them, would stamp us as infidels to the animating spirit of our whole religion—Charity.

For such minds is the work of Dr. Williams intended, and for such it may yield a healing balm and fill an aching void, that multitudes of the most sincere men have not the remotest conception of. They have never experienced the one and therefore never thirsted for the other.

To men of that class for whom it is intended, the perusal of these pages could result in nothing but good; and to men grounded in the faith of the doctrines of the church as popularly received, it can do no harm, for they will turn from its statements in sorrow, contempt, or actual abhorrence, as the temperament and education of the individual may suggest. But there is still remaining a very large class whose minds, we fear, this work will tend to strengthen in evil. There are, unfortunately, many men who would truly rejoice in the removal of all moral restraint; and their minds, contaminated by this desire of false freedom, naturally absorb the sentiments which seem to advance the consummation of their wishes and reject all else. These men wilfully blinding themselves to the fact, that the utmost purity of life and morals is insisted upon in these writings, the absence of which should condemn any work at once, satiate themselves with such words as seem to strike at the ordinary forms of doctrine; for unfit to appreciate the spirit of religion, they look upon the mutilation of matured forms as the annihilation of moral constraint, and hope therefrom to reap the long desired freedom from exterior law.

The spirit of prophecy Dr. Williams has attempted to treat in the same manner as the miracles ; but though his mind altogether rejects the idea of the prophetic eye looking forward into the unborn future and there beholding in shadowy array the things which must yet come to pass in the world, he is able to see, "pervading the prophets, those deep truths which lie at the heart of christianity, and to trace the growth of such ideas—the belief in a righteous God and the nearness of man to God ; The *power of prayer*, and the victory of self-sacrificing patience, ever expanding in men's hearts—until the fulness of time came and the ideal of the Divine thought was fulfilled in the Son of Man." He is unable to shut his eyes to the undeniable shadowing forth of the coming Mesiah which pervades the pages of the Jewish history in symbol, psalm and vision for thousands of years before its full development in the person of Christ ; and it is amusing to observe the ingenuity with which he attempts to effect a reconciliation between his rational belief and his moral convictions, thus, "If any sincere Christian now asks, 'is not then our Saviour spoken of in Isaiah,' let him open his New Testament and ask therewith John the Baptist, whether he was Elias. If he finds the Baptist answering 'I am not,' yet our Lord testifies that in spirit and power this was Elias, a little reflection will show how the historical representation in Isaiah liii., is of some suffering prophet or remnant ; yet the truth and patience, the grief and triumph, have their *highest fulfilment* in him who said, 'Father, not my will but thine.'" That is to say, Isaiah knew nothing of the future, but stated simply historical facts as any other sincere and holy man would have stated them ; nevertheless, it pleased the Almighty in a future age, to bring to pass such things as Isaiah would have foretold in the same words if he had foreknown them. We cannot think that this view, though it may lower the individual position of the prophet, can in any way affect the popular notion of Scripture inspiration in its results, and if by such an immaterial concession Scripture truth can be made palatable to the scientific temperament, let us by all means rejoice in the fact, and let not the recollection, that men hostile to the faith have advanced similar interpretations, jaundice our eyes in considering them, for in his own words, "the accident of such having been alleged by men more critical than devout, should not make Christians shrink from them."

In many passages we are forcibly struck with the faith in the miraculous incarnation of the Deity still existing, notwithstanding the sweeping attempts to destroy the miraculous element altogether. Truly we have fallen upon matter-of-fact days ; yet not so much to this as to the undue prominence given to miracles by a certain class of theologians must the odium, which they have latterly excited, be attributed. To make them the foundation of our faith is to insult it by placing it upon a level with systems of idolatry which abound in more wonderful miracles than are dreamt of in the Chris-

tian's philosophy, and to the full as well attested perhaps; for after all, reported miracles are no miracles. They are principally intended for the generation that behold them, and can, in the same manner, serve no other. We believe in the Scripture miracles on account of our faith in the spirit of the Bible, and not in the spirit of the Bible on account of the miracles; for there is no evidence, except actual sight, that can even pretend of itself to substantiate the performance of a miracle. Let any of those who will be most opposed to such views fancy the effect which would be produced upon his own mind, by his most intelligent friend informing him that he had just been witnessing the phenomenon of a pine log constructing a watch; he may believe his friend deranged, that much learning has made him mad; but not even the most credulous will so far believe him as to follow him with the hope of seeing a repetition of the miracle.

It is the spirit of Christianity and not the miracles that must evangelize the world; to rest this spirit only on the miracles is to rest a man's moral principles upon the texture of his coat. We have been, in our lifetime, requested by a Christian missionary to wound, by shooting, a few Indians, who had, in a drunken frolic, disturbed his rest on the previous night, on the ground that he, as a Christian minister, 'would not like to do it himself,' though he would have 'no objection to provide the necessary ammunition.' We have heard the same man before a thronged assembly expatiate upon the wonders of the Christian faith, and we thought at the time that the reconciliation of this man's words with his deeds would be a greater miracle than any he had described, and we left his church fully convinced that one man living among these Indians a sincere christian life, though he were dumb, would do more, tenfold, to convert them to his faith than the preaching of this man all his lifetime could effect.

The learned doctor having thus remodeled or reinterpreted the prophetic and miraculous element in Holy writ, so as to render them palatable to himself and the class he typifies, cannot feel at ease without determining some surer method by means of which truth may be distinguished from error, and for this purpose discovers within the intelligent mind an ever present power of discriminating between good and evil. This 'verifying faculty,' which has been the fruitful source of so much vain dispute, and which, perhaps, is the only valuable portion of our inheritance from Adam, is merely the interpreting right of conscience, alluded to by Dr. Temple, under another name, and, deny it who will, its acknowledgment is the only main difference between the Catholic and Protestant sections of the church.

Every man instinctively feels that God has not revealed the truth without also imparting to man some means of recognizing it; these means the Protestant finds in his own conscience, the Catholic in the infalible word of his

Church. Deny the right to conscience and you must either restore it to the church, or, by repudiating it altogether, leave us benighted, without a solitary ray to illumine the darkness of our path ; with an ignorant people and an enlightened priesthood it is evidently only safe in the sanctuary of the church ; with the reverse condition it is better in the individual conscience. But among enlightened minds the question reduces itself to this : Is a man *bound* to believe the Bible true *because* he is so *informed* ? If so, a man otherwise *informed* is equally bound to believe it *false*. But this is not so, the verifying faculty, or the gift of the spirit, whether it finds its sanctioning in the heart of an honest and enlightened church or in that of the individual conscience, is the rightful interpreter, and will, to those well instructed in the simple moral law, prove a wonderful discerner of spiritual truth and error. The Conscience within us reveals the truth of Revelation, and the idea of a Revelation finished renders it practically null and void without a continual revelation of its truth by accredited church or private Conscience to the mind of every individual. To this it has been objected, that "by such reasoning, instead of subjecting man, as to his faith and duty, to an external revelation, the revelation itself is subjected to man's internal consciousness." And so it ever must be when the conscience is so far awakened as to demand it, otherwise man becomes the crouching slave and not the willing subject of a revelation on which he has failed to recognise the signature and seal of the Eternal. Man is obliged to accept God's word as he is also obliged to accept the coin of the realm in liquidation of a debt, but in either case Conscience reserves the right of satisfying herself with the ring of the metal.

It is a hard thing to believe that the culture of the intellect should make the attainment of the spirits health more difficult, as though the pride thereby engendered must necessarily crush out the spirit of Christian humility from the heart ; yet the assertion that "not many wise after this world are called," seems frequently rudely thrust before us when we see the evident difficulty with which the most gifted men arrive at holiness of life, for this, after all, is the only true criterion. Certainly the ignorant of this world would appear to have a shorter road to this blessedness we all desire. We have known men altogether innocent of science brought up in the moral teachings of the Bible, believing it, as Mr. Burgon expresses it, "the very utterance of the Eternal, as much God's word as if high heaven were opened and we heard God speaking to us with a human voice," that "from the alpha to the omega of it it is full to overflowing with the Holy Spirit of God. The books of it, and the sentences of it, and the syllables of it, aye, and the very letters of it." Men who would dismiss the first shadow of a doubt of the above from their minds as readily as they would the visit of Satan himself in person ; looking upon the idea of barely questioning the truth of the

received revelations as a sin of the very blackest dye, as a temptation too evidently satanic to be listened to for one moment. We have intimately known such men filled with the spirit of truth and love, filled also with spiritual happiness and content, growing each day in holiness, and shedding peace and light around them. One such living man, and not a generation but produces hundreds of them, is a standing monument of the true life to be drawn from the plainest interpretation of the Scriptures. What then is to be the fate of those men who long for the Faith but cannot receive it unquestioned as the others do; must they with the evidence of that spiritual life before them, by will power, crush out the reason from their souls and extinguish its light for ever, because spiritual peace is better than intellectual grandeur darkened by the hopeless gloom of doubt? Alas! such an outrage committed upon the soul could bring no peace with it. The lamp of reason once lit they must be satisfied to abide by its decisions; and safely they may do so can they but preserve the confiding trust that the same God, from whom is derived that light by which they now behold the obstacles and terrors that others have passed unseen, will, with it, reveal to them another way by which they may escape them, or else endue them with that spiritual power which may enable them to surmount them or trample them beneath their feet. They may in justice also, be allowed to hope, that as the difficulty in reaching heaven is to the learned greater, so when once attained its peace and glory will be greater also; otherwise there must be a fearful truth in the words, that ignorance is bliss and wisdom folly.

The third essay by Mr. Baden Powell, since deceased, is avowedly a protest against the position given to the Scripture miracles as evidences of Christianity, considering them entitled to a much lower place in the scale than that usually assigned to them by orthodox theologians when offered to the intellectual cultivation of the present day.

He draws a very distinct line between what he calls the "essential doctrines of Christianity," which, however, he fails to define, or has left to the "verifying faculty" of each individual to determine, and the "external accessories," which, he believes, "constitute a subject which of necessity is perpetually taking somewhat, at least, of a new form with the successive phases of opinion and knowledge."

It appears to us that the position due to miracles in the scale of Christian evidences varies in every case of application, and cannot therefore be actually defined except within a given range; a fact which Mr. Powell appears to recognize when he acknowledges "that the advocate of Christian evidence triumphs in the acknowledgment, that the strength of Christianity lies in the *variety* of its evidences, suited to all varieties of apprehension; and that, amid all the diversities of conception, those who cannot appreciate

some one class of proofs will always find some other satisfactory, is itself the crowning evidence." So that while to one miracles may be the foundation upon which his faith in christianity rests, to another they are not only without evidential power but without actual existence of any kind whatever. To the latter class it is very evident the writer of this essay belongs, who looks upon the miracles as the "main difficulties and hindrances to the acceptance of christianity." Unaccountably he endows the exquisite mechanism of nature with the majesty and immutability belonging only to the attributes of God. The idea of the immutability of these attributes is quite intelligible; and were nature, as the Pantheists assume, a Pervading Omnipotence instead of the Creator's handiwork, in which, no doubt, we see a material reflection of his spiritual essence, then this mechanism elevated from the position of arbitrary laws to that of inherent attributes, would naturally become immutable also; but creation acknowledged, to deny the attributes which devised the laws of nature the power of altering or suspending them, on any terms, appears illogical and unnecessary.

That the miracles were not intended in all cases as the foundation of faith, is evident from the words of Christ himself, when he attributes the faith of Peter not to "flesh and blood," that is exterior evidence, but to the "Father in Heaven," that is interior revelation. And again, upbraiding the nobleman and the listening multitude at Capernaum, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," evidently pointing to a higher and purer source of faith; and indeed in all the healing miracles a pre-existent faith was necessary to the working of the miracle, thereby for ever denying to them any claim to be considered a ground of faith except to the most obdurate and ignorant.

But there are a few who deny *some* of the miracles only, not from any preconceived immutability of the laws of nature, but from the absence of collateral historical evidence in cases where the result of the miracle must, as they suppose, have been universally felt, as, for instance, in the standing still of the sun, which they rightly contend must mean, in the astronomical light of the present age, a cessation of the rotary motion of the earth upon its own axis, which, to say nothing of other natural consequences, would, even in its addition to the length of the day or night, as the case might be, have made itself felt over the length and breadth of the globe, and surely would have been chronicled in profane as well as in sacred records. But it must be borne in mind that in every case of miracle there are *two* objects to work upon, the spiritual and the material; the material subject of the miracle and the spiritual essence of those for whose benefit the miracle is wrought; upon one of which alone it is necessary to bear. That is in the present instance, either the motion of the earth may have been actually stopped or the minds alone of the Jews may have been so affected that to

their eyes the sun appeared to stand still and the length of the day to be increased. In the former case it certainly would have been a miracle patent to the whole earth, unless additional miraculous power was exerted to counteract its annihilating effect; in the latter only real to those actually concerned.

Mr. Wilson commences his essay by sounding the warning note that we are upon the eve of mighty changes, that the development of Truth handed down to us from past ages has not kept pace with the march of intellect, that it is now high time that "old things should pass away" and "all things become new;" and to justify his opinions, by the occurrences of past history, he refers to the reformation effected by Christ in the Jewish ideas of Truth, and that effected by Wycliffe and his associates in the ideas of their own times; although the latter appears to us to have been less of an advance movement than a general retrogression towards the lost simplicity of the Catholic church. If these expected changes are to consist in the adaptation of old *forms* to the advance of knowledge, when they are required by all means let us welcome them; but is there nothing but worn out *forms* condemned when he affirms that "many evils are seen in various ages, if not to have issued directly, to have been intimately linked with the Christian profession; such as religious wars, persecutions, delusions, impositions, spiritual tyrannies. May good of civilization in our own day, when men have run to and fro, and knowledge has been increased, have apparently not the remotest connection with the gospel." Christianity, or the earnest endeavour to walk in the spiritual footprints of the Redeemer has never *produced* evil or crime of any kind whatsoever, though it may possibly have made the existence of such apparent. Crimes or actual evils are not sin but the visible indices of it, by which its inner strength may be detected.

Sin is a disease of the soul, which may rage within a man so fettered physically or otherwise that he cannot commit crime. So that the thorough suppression of all evil, even by inner moral restraints, may be coexistent with the most hopeless virulence of the disease. Total fettering by law to the suppression of crime is the highest end of political state-craft; it attempts no more, and we can conceive, in a well governed and secularly well educated community, a complete absence of crime, empty prisons, tenantless penitentiaries, while at the heart of every individual rankled envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; this is precisely the end to which all simple political government tends, it has to do with the requirements of time; Christian government with the requirements of eternity; by the eradication of sin which is the root, not the suppression of crime which is the exterior result. In effecting this many crimes may be brought to the surface, as a good medicine will dislodge a deadly disease in the system by first bringing it to the skin before disposing of it. If with this life our

existence terminated then christianity might, perhaps, be considered by some as a bad policy, as filling our whole span of life with confusion in preparing for a future we could not live to see. But as the avowed work of christianity is to prepare men for eternity, it cannot be justly charged with confusions wrought in time ; if these are necessarily attached to its mission it is the duty of political government to repress them. Let these two walk hand in hand, as the temporal and spiritual guides of the human family should walk, and we shall have all that the soul could demand both for the present and for the future. We are body as well as spirit, and the requirements of each must be discovered and supplied. But most worldly disturbances have resulted not from the spirit of christianity but from the human misapprehension of it.

In the same spirit must we regard these "goods of civilization" so highly extolled. It is most probable that such "goods of civilization" as the steam engine, the printing press, the telegraphic cable, and numerous others, might have been brought to their present perfection even though the voice of the Gospel had remained silent for ever. The Gospel has another and a totally distinct mission. Had it been otherwise Christ's work would have consisted in an anticipation of the discoveries of Gallileo, Newton, Watt and others; and the Bible would truly be what some foolish men have, in all ages, averred it to be, a revelation of undiscovered scientific and historical facts pertaining to the physical universe. The loss of these "goods of civilization," having enjoyed them once, we should feel very much no doubt; but is the human race now happier than when it was ignorant of them? Study honestly the care-worn features of the multitudes who throng our railway carriages, and say have they the appearance of men exulting in the triumph of the invention, or is not, rather, the invention altogether forgotten and every heart full of its own grief? Are these the "goods" the heart of man is ever thirsting after, or are they but the playthings with which it would beguile the time and fain forget its thirst completely? Oh the mockery of leading man to the springs of science to quench his thirst with the intoxicating draught which lulls but for a moment to increase tenfold the raging fever after. The mission of the Gospel is to make men happier by making them better, by restoring within their souls the long-distorted image of their Father, and the "goods of civilization," when made subservient to the Gospel's work, are good indeed; of themselves they are but butterflies which grown up children beguile their hours in pursuing, but find no pleasure in when caught.

From this subject the essayist turns to deplore the fact that "the ordinances of public worship and religious instruction provided for the people of England are not used by them to the extent we should expect," stating that according to the statistical returns of 1851 nearly one half of those

able, and with opportunities of attending divine service that year had absented themselves, and attributing this spiritual coldness to "a distrust of the arguments for, or proof of miraculous revelation." We certainly cannot believe that the "arguments" or "proofs" will acquire any new strength from a perusal of "Essays and Reviews;" but far more ignorant men than Mr. Wilson might have arrived at a shorter and truer solution of the difficulty. We admit that many beneficial changes might be made in the wording of the "book of common prayer," but cannot think that by any enlargement of the limits of the ecclesiastical law the national church would gain increased vitality of action; it would no doubt derive incalculable advantage from the destruction of "the strong tendency in England to turn every interest into a right of so-called private property" by which "the nomination to the benefices of the national church have come, by an abuse, to be regarded as part of the estates of patrons, instead of trusts, as they really are." But none of these, alone, appears sufficient to account for the almost universal coldness, so much complained of, which seems to have paralyzed the whole action, lay and clerical, of the established church. It is a long-acknowledged fact that a dearth of spiritual life among the priesthood will inevitably cast its shadow in double darkness upon the congregation. By the students of the Roman Catholic church there is a training to be endured, and to its priests there are privileges denied, sufficient, in a great measure, to deter men, altogether worldly-minded, from volunteering into its service; and although no peculiar privations are necessarily attached to the office of the ministry among dissenting sects, neither, on the other hand, does the occupation of the office confer much worldly honour upon the ministry. In the national church alone do the strongest motives exist for inducing men into its ranks altogether independent of, and opposed to the only motive which should lead honourable and conscientious men to enter the priesthood of any church. To the influential, within its pale, many roads are open to preferment, and even the position held by the lowest in rank is still honourable in the eyes of the world; so that, in a purely secular sense, it is a *good profession*. That these truths are practically acted upon is well known to all those who have mixed much with the divinity students of our British colleges. As a class they are not the most sincere or religious of the national youth; as far as outward signs can testify there is not one in five who appears to have any proper conception at all of the momentous responsibility of the position he is preparing himself to occupy. No man acquainted with college life will deny these facts; and the wonder remains not that we have so many cold and worldly-minded ministers, but that we still have so many spiritual and sincere men adorning the church, a fact truly inexplicable if we consider the materials we have had to work upon. Our national army would run to hopeless ruin if

subjected to the control of foreign or hostile officers, and we can see no just reason for expecting a better fate for our national church under the power of similar conditions.

The first problem to be solved for the restoration of the church to perfect health and vigour consists in discovering the means by which the nation shall be induced to send forth its best and purest youth to fill the offices of the Sanctuary. The immense importance of this cannot be overrated. There are young men in every generation sincere, pure-minded and devotional, stamped by God as His servants; and these the national church by her unalienable right should possess. This problem solved, the next remains, by what method the highest offices in the church shall be held by the holiest and most discreet ministers; a matter to be rendered comparatively easy by the solution of the first. What a true Patriot would he be who, having solved these problems, could bring the results into practical operation. Then, indeed, we should behold the national church enlarging her limits and surely fulfilling her destiny by gathering the nation under her wings as a hen gathereth her chickens; Dissent would fall to pieces from inherent weakness, for the errors of the church are the strength of the sects, and the church would quickly become what it should always be, the glory and the beauty of the world.

With speculative matters the christian church has nothing to do; it cannot make a solitary hair of the smallest of its children white or black, nor add an inch to his stature, and if it can not do that which is least why attempt that which is greatest. The individual mind may, and must perhaps, indulge in *hopes*, the realization of which no church can guarantee, but these should never be permitted to grow so substantial as to interfere with plain rules and teachings. With the nature of the "equity of God's dealings" towards the Gentile world the church has no business, the matter is beyond its reach; that they have within their hearts a law the counterpart of our own, by which they shall be finally judged, we are distinctly told, and where Christ is designated as the "Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe," surely there is enough hinted to justify our fullest trust in the equitable dealings of the Almighty. The church has received the plainest possible instructions respecting its immediate duties; it is not told to worry itself with vain and fruitless enquiries into the equity of God's dealings with the Gentiles, but "Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." When we can reconcile the existence of a momentary pang in the smallest created animal with abstract ideas of the goodness and omnipotence of God, then let us expect a solution of the difficulties connected with the doctrines of

eternal punishment. These are questions beyond our reach to be met only by an abiding Faith in God which need not shut out the humble hope, though it were against hope, that universal good shall yet prevail when sin shall cease, and perhaps Hell itself repentant, loving the most because the most forgiven, shall worship with humanity, and that in the great end, whether sin be thoroughly eradicated from God's universe or not, each individual attribute of the Almighty shall stand clear and justified even before so weak a worm as man!

In the relative values assigned to "christian moral life" and "christian doctrine" we fully concur; the former from its nature unchangeable, the latter fitting and adapting itself to every human soul; and it is this very adapting power itself that renders such sudden reformatations, as the essayists dream of, always unnecessary unless they are produced, like political revolutions, by reactionary pressure from without, caused by a too stringent enforcing of the authority of the form above the spirit from within. It is the glory of the British Constitution that by the free development of this adapting power it has accommodated itself to the growth of the nation as the shell of a nut to that of the kernel contained, and so has escaped the rude revolutions which the absence of this regulating faculty had engendered in other less favoured nations. Let us hope that our ecclesiastical rulers are not less wise than our great statesmen, that they will calmly and gladly behold the gradual and natural changes taking place which alone can obviate the necessity of these sudden and radical reformatations which are always dangerous because, from their reactionary violence, they are carried too far. It is by no means likely, that any two men on earth think precisely alike on the doctrine of the Trinity; each has his own idea according to the spiritual and intellectual development within him. and to the more advanced idea the other will gradually and naturally tend: we can well fancy, too, when in the vaulted cathedral we hear in loud-swelling tones those beautiful words of the *Te Deum*, "The noble army of martyrs praise thee," the very different ideas presented to the worshippers by the one simple word martyr; to the more simple mind is immediately pictured the burning agony of the stake, to another an innumerable host, discovered, it may be, among the lanes and byways of life, of whom the world was not worthy and perhaps has never heard. But it cannot be expected that any arbitrary code of laws could reduce these various minds to unanimity in the interpretation of the word.

The most melancholy portion of this essay is that in which we behold the author descending from his fearless reasonings and lofty independence of spirit, to a petty and contemptible quibbling unworthy of him. Disagreement in sentiment, more or less, can not blind us to real merit, and we think that the stamp of honesty of purpose is clearly evident upon the general

face of the writings before us. It is, therefore, with heartfelt regret we find a man like Mr. Wilson stating first that the "strictly legal obligation" imposed by the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles is "the measure of the moral one," and then exercising his ingenuity in pointing out how the words of these, or any other laws or regulations, may be tortured out of their original sense to mean anything or nothing, thereby exonerating the subscriber from the bonds of his obligation. With all honourable men the moral obligation is higher than the legal, and to measure the higher by the standard of the lower is to cut off all hope or probability of progress; for it is only by keeping a perfection altogether superhuman in view that humanity can make any worthy advance towards perfection at all. There is something very inconsistent, too, in discovering in the articles "restraints which require to be removed," and immediately pointing out that these restraints are only moral and therefore nugatory; and again, the definition of the moral position of the essayist is, in the following words, given in a supposed parallel so utterly unjust that its fallacies must be patent to the most unsophisticated: "And to lay down as an alternative to striving for more liberty of thought and expression within the church of the nation, that those who are dissatisfied may sever themselves and join a sect, would be paralleled by declaring to political reformers that they are welcome to expatriate themselves if they desire any change in the existing forms of the constitution." They would not be the first reformers, though the name is scarcely sufficiently strong, whose expatriation had been not only "welcomed," but materially assisted by the constitutional government of the country.

The object of the fifth essay, by Mr. Goodwin, is to prove untenable the position assumed by many theologians that "the Mosaic narrative, however apparently at variance with our knowledge, is essentially and in fact true;" and to demonstrate on the other hand, "that the Mosaic narrative does not represent correctly the history of the universe up to the time of man." Respecting the first he remarks, with some truth, that "the spectacle of able and, we doubt not, conscientious writers engaged in attempting the impossible, is painful and humiliating." But to many the contemplation of his own task may be equally painful, considering, as they will, how much more profitably time may be employed in eradicating moral evil from the universe than in criticising the astronomical acquirements of Moses. With such conceits we neglect the grand lesson of our great school-room, the world, and waste our time in play. Rather concentrate our whole energies upon the main task now, and perhaps in a perfect world hereafter such questions may present an agreeable pastime. Little indeed is to be gained by such discussions now. The learned have their own reflective faculties

and will use them; but prove to the ignorant, and remember they form the vast majority, that the Mosaic account of the creation is false, and with it the whole moral law will loose its power over them.

By the most ignorant the power, not the beauty, of the moral law is discerned, and it is only after long and careful building that the acquisition of the key-stone of perfect love establishes the self supporting strength of the arch and the centering may be removed without danger to the structure; and what consolation would it be after the sudden destruction of millions of such structures by the too hasty removal of this centering, to find that the few which had received the keystone were altogether self-sustaining and towered proud and strong amidst the universal desolation and ruin! The exterior support, although to them useless, was at least harmless, whereas to the many it was the sole source of their very existence.

The history of the Jewish nation is the history of the Church, and its morals are invariably drawn from and pointed by its historical incidents, so that even were the whole history shewn to consist of anecdote, parable, or poetic imagery, nevertheless its stories are so inwoven with the moral teaching of the whole Bible that it would be impossible to separate them without the most fatal results to children in knowledge as well as children in years. Rather let them remain fettering some with wholesome restraints even from the cradle to the grave; to others gradually loosening and finally falling away, when the more spiritual life and essence of the book has rendered the material fetters unnecessary; when perfect love has completely cast out all fear. But let us shrink in horror from the thought of ruining a world that the spiritual grandeur of a few individuals may be displayed.

The essay of Mr. Pattison, from the nature of the subject considered, cannot appear in that attitude of hostility to the orthodox creed supposed to be assumed by some of the others. It is not unlikely that the author's ideas are to a certain degree similar to those of his fellow essayists, but if so the fact is not apparent on the face of the composition before us, which is a well considered history of the development of religion, or as the work is entitled, "The tendencies of religious thought in England, 1688-1750."

Endorsing Dr. Temple's parallel, he considers thought in every age to be the natural result and development of itself in the preceding age; that "both the Church and the world of to-day are what they are as the result of the whole of their antecedents." The three great agencies, themselves the result of their own antecedents, which were developed in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and are the preceding cause of the present development of religious thought in our day, are, the Spirit of Toleration, the Evangelical Spirit, and the Spirit of Rationalism. The 18th century was especially an age of Rationalism, that is, an age in which the reasonableness of christianity was continually referred to as its principal claim to

acceptance. "Christianity appeared made for nothing else but to be *proved*: what use to make of it when it was proved was not much thought about. Reason was at first offered as the basis of Faith, but gradually became its substitute. The mind never advanced as far as the stage of belief; for it was unceasingly engaged in reasoning upon it. The only quality in Scripture which was dwelt upon was its credibility." In the first part of the century the reasonableness of the doctrines of revelation as an internal testimony was insisted upon, in the latter part the question was narrowed to the proof of the external or historical evidences of christianity; and so christianity became crystalized, as it were, into a cold and lifeless moral law, which our self-interest induced us to honour and obey. On this state of religion Mr. Pattison, with a true appreciation of the value of the spiritual life above all systems of forms or moral laws, however excellent, remarks, "Yet the experience of the last age has shewn us unmistakably that where this is our best ideal of life, whether with the Deists, we establish the obligation of morality on independent grounds; or with the Orthodox add the religious sanction, it argues a sleek and sordid epicurism, in which religion and a good conscience have their place among the *means by which life is to be made comfortable*." By such a phase of religion the order of things was completely reversed, the conduct was regulated by intellectual perception and calculation, instead of being excellent as the "spontaneous efflux of our character." Like a dead tree hung with artificial instead of natural fruit, good conduct was *put on* because the intellect pronounced it good and beautiful, it was no longer the luxuriant evidence and result of the spirits vitality. Faith, no longer "the devout condition of the entire inner man," resolved itself into the "intellectual perception of regulative Truth."

But fortunately, as before stated, Rationalism was not the only force in action; the spirit of Toleration was also playing its part, and thirdly that "great rekindling of the religious consciousness of the people, which, without the established church, became Methodism, and within its pale has obtained the name of the evangelical movement." The resultant of these three forces is our present conception of theology, which, in its twofold character, is beautifully defined in this essay as "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 vision hereafter. Secondly, and in an inferior degree, it is ethical and regulative of our conduct as men in those relations which are temporal and transitory."

Notwithstanding the neutral position of this essay and its purely historical character, it has come in for a share of the general condemnation accorded to the whole book by those who are always ready to take a party

view of such matters, and generally, either totally ignorant of the question or possessing a knowledge derived from a few maimed quotations, rashly judge and condemn what they have never fairly or calmly considered.

The last of these famous essays, by Mr. Benjamin Jowett, has taken for its subject a topic which should be approached with fear and trembling, and in such a spirit it is evidently considered by its devout and learned author; not that he owns the least distrust in the strength of his own arguments, but that his soul is full to overflowing of the good man's dread of dispensing that which, though most necessary to some, he knows to be highly dangerous to the many. Plain discussions on the beauty of holiness and truth are universally good and can do harm to none; but questions of this kind, called into existence rather by the morbid than the healthy development of the age, are only not fatally dangerous because incomprehensible to that particular class they would otherwise tend to ruin. To the intelligent and healthy Christian such matters are a pleasant and profitable exercise; to certain, and but too numerous morbid natures, a necessary aliment; to the crowd whom God, by a self-preserving instinct, has rendered deaf to their appeals, a most deadly poison; and this owing to the several mental conditions of the three. We have noticed young birds, but lately hatched, run for some time with the shells which had formed the walls of their embryo state still hanging on their backs, and we could fancy the self-complacent pleasure with which the older birds would discuss among themselves, the absurdity of carrying about incumbrances now become useless, and the joy of the first freedom and activity gained by these young listeners when, obedient to the voice of their superiors, they had shaken off the broken and now worthless fragments. But what if the word spoken could strike upon the ear of the embryo yet contained within the perfect shell, and it had strength and will to cast it off also! The parallel may seem ludicrous but is not the less illustrative of the three mental conditions just referred to.

It is truly refreshing to see the fear lest the tender plants should suffer with which the great and good man approaches his difficult task, candidly discussing the question of the interpretation of the Scriptures, which he considers have been in many cases misinterpreted; owing, firstly, to the poetical spirit in man tending to allegorical interpretations; secondly, to the "rigid application of logic" to the principles of interpretation; thirdly, to the too "minute examination of words, often withdrawing the mind from more important matters;" and, fourthly, to the "tendency to exaggerate or amplify the meaning of Scripture words for the sake of edification," until one is apt to become persuaded of the "divine truth of his own repetitions." For these causes he considers that, in the present day, Christian scholars

find themselves unknowingly pledged to the support of many opinions ready formed to their hands which, nevertheless, learned and unprejudiced men have long since found to be fallacious or absurd; that "the use made of Scripture by Fathers of the Church, as well as by Luther and Calvin, affects our idea of its meaning at the present hour," and that thereby the powers of intelligent men are diverted into a comparatively useless channel, for the resources of knowledge are turned into a means, "not of discovering the true rendering of Scripture but of upholding a received one;" but fortunately the "book itself remains as at the first, unchanged amidst the changing interpretations of it."

But while it is highly desirable that we should be furnished with the most correct translation of every passage of the Bible, yet controversies respecting the spiritual interpretation of these passages are generally profitless, and are often due to no higher principle than party spirit, however unaware of this fact the controversialists may be. In the first place the well-known, though too often forgotten fact that they lead to nothing, but the confirmation of each party in his own views, should put an end to them in future. When Casaubon was being shown over the Sorbonne in Paris his guide said, "in this hall have the doctors disputed for three hundred years." "Aye; and what have they settled?" was his shrewd remark; but the lesson has hardly been received by the world yet.

In considering the "prior questions which lie in the way of a reasonable criticism" of the Scriptures, Mr. Jowett turns his attention first to the much-vexed question of inspiration, a word, than which, there is none in the language more capable of a variety of interpretations; but these infinite renderings are but the adaptation of the one original idea to the infinite varieties of the human mind. The unsophisticated man, who has never exercised his thinking faculties, considers the Eternal as the actual dictator, word for word, of the whole Bible, as it now stands, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelations; that God commenced each chapter saying "write," and then one by one gave utterance to the words which form the Holy Scriptures; and this belief is to him the very bond of life, the shell which is necessary to the preservation of his embryo faith, the destruction of which, before that faith is quickened into higher life, must result in the inevitable death of the germ; and from this simple faith to that received by the highest intelligence there are innumerable gradations, each adapted, by a beneficent Creator, to the condition of life it is intended to preserve, yet performing the same functions in every degree of development; in every case still conveying in some form the reverence which all beings feel for the word and will of God.

But the truly spiritual man, let his intellectual status be what it will, cannot suffer his faith to be shaken or disturbed by questions or considera-

tions of this nature. His faith he feels to be an inner-life, built upon a rock, high lifted above the tempestuous waves of the external world, and that rock is Christ. Every discovery of science will increase his vision but cannot establish his security already established and altogether independent of external knowledge; the revelations of history or geology may increase the joy of his faith but cannot affect the faith itself, it is born within, nourished by direct communion with God, to whom alone it owes its existence and its strength. "Is it to be thought," remarks this able essayist, "that christianity gains anything from the deciphering of the names of some Assyrian and Babylonian Kings, contemporaries, chiefly, with the latter Jewish history? As little as it ought to lose from the appearance of a contradictory narrative of the Exodus in the chamber of an Egyptian temple of the year B. C. 1500. The latter supposition may not be very probable, but it is worth while to ask ourselves the question, whether we can be right in maintaining any view of religion which can be affected by such a probability."

Happy is the man who can intelligently read together the two volumes of the Almighty—the spiritual Word and the material creation—nature and the Bible—page by page, so that his knowledge of the one shall never so far outrun his acquaintance with the other, as to make their contents even for a time apparently irreconcilable. Thus read and carefully compared, they will become to him the source of his most intense delight, the joy of his present life, and the abiding glory of the endless ages before him in the future.

The idea brought before us by the whole revealed Scripture is that of a world full of strength and vigour, keenly alive to all sensations, whether of pleasure or pain, rejoicing in its life and independence, wrapt up in itself, with its back clean turned upon holiness, in full pursuit of the evanescent and selfish delights in which it takes the keenest pleasure, hostile though they be to the feeble ray of spiritual life expiring day by day within it. How shall it be delivered? Proclaim the beauty of Holiness? But this is spiritually discerned and the world cannot receive it. Advance the necessity of restraining law? Its own pleasure is the only law it has ever known, which leads it still further and further from all hope of health. There is but one road open to delivery from certain ruin, and leading to that road there are three distinct steps, namely, Terror, the Moral Law, the Inner Faith. Arrived upon the last the other two, like those in the fairy tale, melt away altogether; but upon one of these three steps stand all the christian world of every degree; and hard it is for those standing below to comprehend the language of those in advance, although the higher, from memory of his own experience, ought well and fully to sympathise with every want and feeling of the lower.

Take an individual example ; our friend is no criminal, but a man of the world, wrapt up in its business and its pleasures ; he has injured no man and has done his neighbour no harm, and perfectly satisfied with this negative pole of religion, he follows the bent of his own inclinations on the great road of the world where he is undistinguishable from the positive christian. For the first time in his life he is ill ; he is brought to the very gates of Death, and a fearful, indefinite dread arising, whence he cannot tell, covers his soul as with a pall, and fills his spirit with an agony of awe unknown before. Life is flickering, and the jaws of Death and Hell are open wide before him. Never before had he suspected the existence of an evil thought within him, but the veil is, by an invisible hand, removed from his heart, and his soul shrinks shuddering back from the contemplation of the foul corruption there. God's first agent, Terror, has done its work ; he has seen the vanity of life and felt the shadow of the judgment to come darken the threshold of his heart : he stands upon the first step, a trembling slave crouching beneath the cruel lash of his own awakening conscience, the contempt of the world below the object of compassion to those above, as far from God as ever, but with his face turned fearfully towards Him. He recovers fully ; and feels with his returning strength the force of old habits also growing strong within him ; he would laugh away these phantoms of Dread, and return whence he came, but the awful agony of that hour is vividly before him still ; absolute Terror holds him as a power of hell pressed into the service of God. Then comes the necessity of outer law, and with much difficulty, yet constrained by this Terror, he *puts on* temperance, truth, purity, and all the christian virtues, like fruit artificially fixed upon the dry branches of an unhealthy tree. These are of full value by themselves as what they are, but are no index of life within ; the smallest incipient bud derived from an inner vitality would be worth ten thousand times the whole to this suffering man ; he is indeed upon the second step, but this is not life. But his eyes are constantly fixed upon the beautiful, though borrowed fruit he wears ; he feels more and more the real excellence of Virtue, and almost unknown to himself an instinctive effort after life is awakened within his soul, and lo ! a bud appears, another and another, and the leaves thicken and the fruit forms, fruit, it may be remarked, no better, perhaps not so good indeed as the former, but of infinitely greater value as the sure sign of the great desideratum—Life. He stands upon the third step, with much to learn, much to suffer perhaps, on the long road before him, yet now, in the fullest sense of the words, actually born again, a new creature, who may smile at that phantom Terror which nevertheless has performed the important office of leading him to the station he now occupies.

Some passages in the essay would seem to imply that the christian dis-

pensation had lived out its time ; in such case we should faithfully expect a new and higher Revelation adapted to the development of the age. But such, in our opinion, is not the aspect of the times. Christian truth has indeed been clogged with many earthy doctrines, frozen, as it were, into a cold and lifeless statue, but the truth as it is in Christ still remains ; and neither has the present, nor any other age, attained so near to that perfection as to render a higher revelation of the will of God requisite. Immediately upon the ascension of Christ the Apostles began to mould the truth to their own conceptions, and handing it thus moulded down to posterity age after age has so impressed it with the changing character of its own likeness, that at times the gold has been almost hidden by the confusion of images and superscriptions, and the beauty of divine truth concealed by the deformity of human error. It is truly by Scripture light alone that we can discover the bright original ; but universal similarity of interpretation, far from being necessary to the successful search, would present an insurmountable barrier to it unless, indeed, all minds were cast in the same mould. To those who cannot find fasting and confession in the Roman Catholic sense commanded in the Bible, their appearance might constitute a rock upon which their souls might suffer shipwreck ; yet Roman Catholics of the most undeniable Holiness and Faith have solemnly declared that the practice of both has been, through Christ, the source of their highest spiritual blessings. Who shall dare to snatch the staff from the hand of one brother and cast it as a stumbling block before the feet of another, thereby causing the fall of both ? If our blessing be your curse why wish to rob us of that which is worse than unprofitable to you and more than very life to ourselves ?

The most objectionable part of Mr. Jowett's philosophy is his treatment of miracle and prophecy. With his associates he seems afraid to face Science before he has propitiated her by this sacrifice. The notion is becoming very prevalent among a certain class of men that to acknowledge miracle is to ignore science, and is guarded by the assertion that "all scientific men agree upon this point," a notion which is based upon a falsehood and therefore cannot be too strongly condemned. The popular acceptance of miracle thus he scientifically rejects and fills up the void with something, which something is too undefined and too intangible for the most delicate sensibility to grasp. To most men the reconciliation of the acknowledged looking forward of the Jewish nation to Christ, and of the incarnation of the divine Essence, with the ignoring of prophecy and miracle, is incomprehensible ; but between their definition of the miraculous and the author's there may be, and probably there is, a world of difference.

No one who studies the pages of this essay, however repugnant to his preconception some of the ideas may appear, can fail to be struck with the

spirit of true love and hopefulness which leavens the whole work ; the broad Christian charity which suffereth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things ; the immoveable firmness of the faith in the goodness of God, and the intensity of the hope which illumines with confiding trust the gloomiest recesses of the future. It is such sentiments which draw us in heart insensibly towards the writer, and force us to recognize in his character the love of a father as well as the wisdom of a teacher.

Whether Form-worship was the besetting sin of past ages or is only peculiar to the present it might be difficult to determine. There has certainly been a tendency at all times, more or less, to degrade spiritual truths into material forms ; but it is questionable whether this tendency was ever before universal as now it is in the Christian world. Truth has indeed come into the world, but men have first materialized it, and then from the mass images have been carved to suit the tastes of every church and sect, each one glorying in the image itself has made, and calling to all the world to fall down and worship it. So that it has become at last a matter of doubt to some whether they should look for the worshippers of the real Christ within or without the pale of the visible church ; for if this image worship be christianity then to be false to it may be to be true to Christ. The Son of God came into the world full of grace and truth to shew light to them that sate in darkness, and to be an example to all future time. Are his graces the graces that adorn the whole Christian Church at the present day ? The two great branches of that church—the Catholic and the Protestant,—professing to worship the same God, to follow the same Master, and seek the same Heaven, do they not eye one another with mistrust and jealousy, with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness ? Is not the prayer of the one when in the presence of the other, “ Lord I thank thee that thou hast not made me as other men, or even as that sinner ? ” How readily do they both forget that the words of their common Lord were spirit and truth not form and doctrine. Look at yon Protestant humbly praying to God through Christ, and that Catholic as humbly approaching Christ his Saviour through the Virgin. Whether is knowledge or Faith the main condition of effectual prayer ? Tell me which of the two possesses the most contrite spirit and the most loving heart towards his Father, and I will tell you which of the offerings he will most willingly receive.

It is high time for idolatry, whether it consist in worshipping blocks of wood and stone or modern forms and doctrines, to cease altogether. There

are political societies organized in the present day styling themselves religious brotherhoods, and laying claim to Christ's word as their foundation, whose practical life, however useful in a political sense, would disgrace the ignorance of the darkest heathenism, invoking the God of love, and living a life of hate, worshiping their creed and not their Christ; and even their very best men seem carrying the truth as it were, in a sieve through which the essential spirit passes, leaving nothing but the dregs and refuse behind.

The effect of essays and reviews at such a time, clearing away the accumulated rubbish of ages, and bringing man as it were face to face with his God, ought to have been good, and would have been had it not gone too far. It is very true that miracle and prophecy form the main feature of many heathenish religions, and it is equally true that in the christian faith they hold a more subordinate position; but if the first are false it is no argument that these are false also, in fact their existence only shews more plainly the universal tendency of the human mind to look for a revelation from on high.

The ignoring of miracle and prophecy is the great blemish of the book, but infant science, the capricious babe, its tender eyes even get unfit to bear the blazing light of the advancing day, had demanded the sacrifice, and sober men have not hesitated to yield it rather than hear their darling cry.

What is the visible universe but, in all probability, a spec in the creations of the Eternal; and what the solar-system, but an insignificant part of this same visible universe; and what the earth, but a small star in the solar system; and man, but a poor worm, crawling upon the surface of that little star, more feeble, more wretched, more debased in his own mind than the verriest worm, yet with inner yearnings and aspirations that can trample the universe beneath its feet, and soar to a communion with the eternal spirit of God. Is it credible that such a being should be left for ages with no other revelation, no other source of comfort than that contained within the book of nature? True he has seen God there most visibly portrayed, and read his grandeur, and his wisdom, and his power, in the still starry heavens and the magnificent beauty of the blushing earth; but the knowledge made him miserable; "the tree of knowledge was not that of life." He knew within his inmost soul longings which the book of nature could never satiate, and bleeding wounds which no balm on earth could heal. What folly to believe the Father should implant such yearnings in the hearts of his children, and yet supply no spring to quench the thirst! His first witness was his Work, the material world from whose prolific bosom springs every variety of good to satisfy the wants of every appetite. Shall God pamper the body and neglect the soul? His next

witness was his Word, the spiritual life which like its shadow, the material world, supplied from its own living fountain the spiritual wants of every soul. At this clear fountain are all the longings of the heart explained and satisfied; there man beholds the revelation of the two great truths, that the God whom he has already adored in nature is his own Father, and that from that Father's love he has been alienated by sin. So self-witnessing are these truths to the conscience, that if only the soul is once brought from the earth to listen to them, they are no sooner uttered than believed. By these a world of mystery is cleared away; the lifelong contention between the "low wants and lofty will" is now made plain. To sin he owes these hated grovelling desires, while his highest aspirations are but his natural birth-right, the proper heritage of the son of God. But this is sad intelligence indeed—better—far better to have concealed from him for ever his glorious lineage, when with it comes the chilling truth that his inheritance is lost and he an exile from his Father's house.

Turning then to the volume of nature he beholds his Father's hand stretched out to him for good; the wild flowers carpeting the earth beneath his feet, rejoice his eyes with their frail delicate beauty; the purple mountains mingle their summits in the azure heavens and fill his soul with exultant gladness; he sees the bright canopy above enfolding the green earth in its loving arms, and turn where he will he finds convincing evidence that exiled though he be, he is not wholly lost. Where love is there is hope. He turns more confidently to the other book, and what a glorious revelation meets his eye. His Elder Brother is with his Father still, and loves him with an everlasting love! He has been to visit him, He has suffered for him, He has not only brought down terms of reconciliation with his Father, but He has also shewn how these terms may be accepted, and the alienating power of sin eradicated from the soul for ever. He looks upon the life his Brother lead and thinks what his own should have been. His heart is penetrated with his Father's love; renouncing self, and fixing his gaze above, he steadily proceeds to imitate the great Example, his attention becoming gradually so absorbed in heavenly things that he is borne day by day further from the earth, and the likeness of Christ forming gradually within him reveals itself in every act and word and thought.

These are the all-important revelations of scripture, and to neglect these for the sake of controversies on creed and doctrine, is as though two men should stand disputing in a cave as to the manner in which their lamps should be held to afford the greatest light; the danger being, that in the excitement of discussion, time may be forgotten, the lamps extinguished, and the men lost. And to these great revelations man should come with an unprejudiced mind, prepared to accept the truth in whatever form

it may present itself; for there is nothing too absurd to believe if we first ransack our brains for speculations, and then bring them to the light of revelation avowedly to enquire whether they be true, but in reality to hunt out the passages that may in any way be wrested to their support, as though we should carry vessels of muddy water to the spring, not to draw from that spring and quench our thirst, but to see whether we could not discover within it. floating impurities, sufficient to justify us in drinking the foul water we had brought with us in our vessels. Without this revelation man's highest religion would have been a cold and lifeless pantheism. He would have walked from his cradle to his grave a sorrowing orphan, feeling himself infinitely below the visible creation as to his inner consciousness of sin; infinitely above it as to his indefinite longings after good. The unutterable blessings of prayer would for ever have been denied him, until overcome with the infirmities of age he would sink at last into the earth, a riddle to himself, and a slur upon the character of the God that formed him.

Nothing is more true than that God is a real, present, individual God; that the whole object of our life here is to prepare ourselves to glorify him and enjoy his presence; that this preparation is not the work of a day nor a month, nor a year, but of the life, and is accomplished gradually, bringing every thought into subjection to Christ, by inducing a childlike confiding faith in God as our Father, and a charitable, hearty and unfeigned love to all the world as a brotherhood, which are inevitable and unerring signs of the birth of that new life which can be reached only by earnest, never-ceasing, watchful prayer. Charity and love may indeed be put on as ornaments at first, but ere long the spirit will do its work; the quickening power will increase within, and what were put on with difficulty will now appear naturally as the rightful efflux of the new-born character. Then is the great work finished, and the soul, of every creed, may look calmly into the future, awaiting in hopeful joy the call of its Father and its God.

The essayists bring us face to face with these truths stripped of all outer trappings, and if we are shocked at the manner in which the popular belief in miracles is treated, we must bear in mind that there are some who have thrown aside the bible on account of their repugnance to those miracles, just as a hungry child will hastily reject a piece of bread in the crumb of which he sees, or fancies he sees, imbedded some small unsightly object; it is wiser to pick it out and return the bread than that the child should perish of hunger. The miracles may be laid aside by some without fatal consequences, but the great truths referred to cannot; in fact, the sole object of the miracles was to make the others acceptable, as we offer a child sugar to sweeten his medicine; but if older children do not require the sugar, must we then refuse them the medicine also?

But although these are the great truths of our religion, yet a national church cannot be sufficiently safe from the fact of her being founded upon this substantial basis ; the natural rock no doubt is strong, but she must also have her artificial bulwarks. The imagination of man is an habitual wanderer and will find, as it were, the full length of its tether, fix the centre where you will. This centre-post must be fixed in the very heart of Truth, and even riveted there by the strongest artificial means, else it will be torn up by the struggles of the Imagination, which, once free, will inevitably lose itself in the intricate labyrinths of Error. If within the Holy of Holies of the national church these Essayists have tried the elasticity of their tether until it is now even ready to snap, where would they have wandered had the centripetal force of its laws been less powerful than they are ? and while we are partly persuaded that they, as men, are acting conscientiously in holding their present positions as pastors and teachers to the church of England, we cannot conceive in what manner some of them have succeeded in reconciling their teachings with their vows. After studying these pages carefully and calmly, casting away prejudice and putting the question of abstract truth and error aside, the verdict appears plain and inevitable : " The teaching of these men is not the teaching of the church of England," and the very fact of their being able satisfactorily to themselves to reconcile their teachings with the ecclesiastical laws is the strongest possible evidence these laws cannot be too rigid.

Upon some of those doctrines of the church which have split her into many sects these writers have been wisely silent, for the Bible does not pretend to be a revelation of all the mysteries of God, but simply such as are absolutely necessary to individual salvation, and even these are so dimly revealed as to render them acceptable less to intellect than Faith : were all things clearly evident to Reason Faith would be swallowed up in sight, and the truest teacher of our pilgrimage would be lost to us for ever, for Faith above all is effective in transforming the soul ; it is this necessary confidence in God, when our vision fails us, that, becoming a habit, radically changes the whole inner-man, making God the father of his spirit and the great centre of all his hopes.

Of the eternal punishment of the lost little should be said—to call it irreconcilable with the attributes of God is simply to confess that man's little knowledge cannot measure it. But we know that Pain does exist, and there is no argument against the eternal punishment of man that does not equally hold against the sufferings of a sparrow robbed of its little ones. That God has permitted sin and pain to desolate and blight this world is a fact as incomprehensible as it is undeniable, the wherefore, it is equally vain and wrong to ask because it has not been revealed. Enough that to each individual son the Eternal Father calls and waits with open arms to

fold him in His embrace if he will only come ; the longing of God for man's restoration- and yet the absolute inefficacy of that God-like longing without the willing coöperation of man is touchingly revealed in the words of our Saviour : "How often would I have gathered you, but you would not," which puts Hell in the light of a hated but inevitable necessity in the face of God ; and in the great End we doubt not, though pain exist, the wisdom and goodness of God will yet stand justified before His children.

"Essays and Reviews" is in fact a reaction against the extreme Tractarian movement, and therefore in itself extreme ; it is the legitimate fruit of the Reformation and the natural result of the transfer of the power of interpretation from the church to the individual. Let not those who have planted the tree be the first to refuse the fruit. We have no fear of its whole effect upon the world ; many good men, who have or have not read it, will condemn it from the pulpit and the chair ; while many, who have approached more boldly to its words, will hear the spirit that terrified them answer, "It is I, be not afraid," and will find themselves with a counsellor and a friend. But never were men more blindly or fanatically mistaken than those Atheists and Scoffers who deem they recognise the voice of an ally in its sentiments. Light and Darkness, Truth and Error, Heaven and Hell, are not more diametrically opposed than the mind of this book and the spirit of a godless world !

Let the church not fear ; confiding in her Father as a God not far from any one of us, by whom literally and truly her every motion is watched and her every want supplied, she may rest secure.

Let infant Science, like a truant child, perform its gambols, tearing and scattering to the winds what it shall yet more sedulously gather ; the great invisible church may rest assured ; she is in the presence of her God, who grasps her Truths in His everlasting hands, and nothing shall be lost. Yet a little while and Science, her childhood past, shall become her dearest companion, her most inseparable friend. They shall hold sweet council together and kneel together, in solemn adoration, before the throne of their common Father. And if, at such a time, it shall appear that the creeds and doctrines of the numerous sects have been the scaffoldings wherewith the spiritual temple of the inner man has been erected ; then, their work finished, let the scaffoldings perish. The Building remaineth for ever !

