

THE  
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY  
AND  
PRINCETON REVIEW.

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NEW SERIES, No. 14.—APRIL, 1875.

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Art. I.—THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

I Peter III: 18-21.

“ *Οτι καὶ, Χριστὸς, ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν επαθε, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ Θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. Ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, ἀπειθήσασι ποτὲ, ὅτε ἅπαξ ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε, κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τουτὶ ἐστὶν ὀκτώ ψυχαὶ, διεσώθησαν δι ὕδατος.*”

The horizon of this passage virtually sweeps the whole circle of revealed truth unto salvation. In it, we have theology proper, or the doctrine of God in Trinity. In it, we have soteriology, or the doctrines of the constitution of the person of Christ and of his redeeming work. In it, we have anthropology, or the doctrine concerning man and his relation to Christ, lost and saved. In it, we have ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the Church as the depository of inspired truth and the instrument of its proclamation to men. In it, we have eschatology, or the doctrine of the last things—death, the state of the soul after death, the resurrection from the dead, both for Christ and ourselves, and the final salvation of the righteous

## Art. VII.—THEISTIC REACTIONS IN MODERN SPECULATION.\*

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IN the address delivered at Belfast, last August, by Mr. Tyndall, as President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, he introduced a declaration in regard to the inherent powers of matter with the very singular phrase, "Abandoning all disguise, the confession I feel bound to make to you." etc. And the sentences which follow are a very bold declaration of the materialistic origin "of every form of life." Can this language be understood in any way that will save the reputation of the speaker for perfect candor in his previous utterances as a teacher of physical science? Did he disguisedly believe before, what he now, for the first time, ventured to make public? Was this declaration in regard to the all-potency of matter a position consciously novel to Mr. Tyndall? Was he not perfectly aware that, however it may have lain in his own mind previously, he was now, in the view of the public, taking a longer and bolder step towards materialistic atheism than in any of his previous published speculations?

So far as the Belfast address is concerned, the matter stands thus: After a long argument to show that the whole tendency of scientific investigation in the past has been to establish the independence and sufficiency of atoms or atomic forces, in which he deals out praise or blame to philosophers and investigators, according as they did or did not favor this doctrine; he comes to Mr. Spencer and Mr. Darwin, men most of all after his own heart. And yet, even in the speculations of these leaders of modern thought, he intimates a certain imperfection or defect. They have not gone far enough for him. They have touched

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\* *Science and Religion* by John Tyndall; *N. Y. Tribune* Pamphlet Edition.

*Address* delivered before the British Association, assembled at Belfast, by John Tyndall, F. R. S., President. Revised by the author. With a Second Preface replying to his Critics. New York. D. Appleton & Co.

*Journal of Speculative Philosophy.* St. Louis, October, 1874.

*Three Essays on Religion.* By John Stuart Mill. New York, 1875.

lightly and inconclusively on the problem of the origin of life. Mr. Darwin thinks all species were evolved from one primordial form. Mr. Tyndall is not satisfied with this. He pushes Mr. Darwin with the question: Was this primordial form created or not? Mr. Darwin does not reply, and his questioner deems it about as unscientific to concede the creation of one primordial form as of any or *all*. It is anthropomorphism,\* a mortal sin in the eyes of modern physicists. "We need clearness and thoroughness here," says Mr. Tyndall. Many creative acts, *or not one*. Matter insufficient, and requiring a creator; or matter self-existent and all sufficient. This is the critical point in the Belfast address. Here is the Rubicon which even Mr. Darwin has not crossed. Mr. Tyndall stands a moment on the same side. Looking over, he sees Lucretius, the atheistic Latin poet, on the other shore, and is fascinated by his appearance and his declaration that "nature is seen to do all things spontaneously, without the intermeddling of the gods." He can stand it no longer. He plunges in. "Abandoning all disguise," he says, "the confession that I feel bound to make before you is that I prolong the vision backward across the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that matter—which we, in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium—the promise and potency of every form of life."

That an uncreated first-matter is here declared to be the origin of all things, we think, admits of no question. Mr. Tyndall, it is true, immediately struggles to regain his footing upon spiritualist ground by the help of idealism. He seems to call out to Mill and Kant and Fichte and Berkeley and Hume, to

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\* Very wonderful is the professional repugnance of your modern physicist to anthropomorphism; *i. e.*, acting as a man would act. Atomomorphism, that is the truly high style; doing it up like an atom—there is your divine idea. An unintelligent atomic force is a far more appropriate term of comparison from which to get your conception of Deity, than an intelligent creature, confessedly the most sublime of nature's works. Mr. Tyndall tries to annihilate one of his critics by intimating that his God must be a Big Man. We might retort that Mr. Tyndall's God is a Big Atom, and, generally speaking, we should prefer the former to the latter. In the Belfast address Mr. Tyndall speaks contemptuously of the theory of the universe derived "not from the study of nature, but from the observation of man," as if there could be any correct way of studying nature other than contemplating chiefly its most important objects.

save him from sinking in the mire of a bottomless materialism. Very slender is their aid. They can only assert the unknowableness or the unreality of matter. To a man who has already let go of mind and fled to matter, they can only make things worse. Mr. Tyndall knows nothing of mind as an ultimatum, they know nothing of matter as ultimate. He had better withdraw his appeal, and go back to his materialism again. He, in fact, does so. "Considered fundamentally" he says, "it is by the operation of an insoluble mystery that life is evolved, species differentiated, and *mind unfolded* from their prepotent elements in the immeasurable past." [The italics are ours.]

Hence, mind is secondary and derived. The not-mind, the unintelligent something, is primary and original. Mind did not act upon and bring forth the not-mind; but the not-mind is the cause of mind. The not-mind, the unintelligent, appeared first, and the intelligent only after the action of its prepotent (unintelligent) elements, through an immeasurable past. This is evidently the order which Mr. Tyndall recognizes as pervading the universe. He wraps it in mystery, says it is by the operation of an "insoluble mystery, that mind is unfolded," and ventures to add: "There is, you will observe, no very rank materialism here." For our part, we do not see how mystery mitigates the rankness of the materialism. In fact, we know nothing more mysterious than materialism, and the ranker it is, the deeper is the mystery.

No! if Mr. Tyndall would vindicate beyond question his belief in spirit and in God, let him make mind a factor in the production of his universe, and not a pitiful result of the workings of mindless forces through immeasurable ages. If he even holds that the *primum mobile* may be a nondescript something, involving mind and matter alike, no more the one than it is the other, let him say so. But the most he says is, that, according to the doctrines of evolution, all things physical and mental "have their unsearchable roots in a cosmical life." Now, as matter contains the promise and "potency of every form and quality of life," this cosmical life must find in matter and not in mind its ultimatum; hence, "the phenomena of physical nature, as well as those of the human mind, have their unsearchable roots in"—matter! So much for the first form of the address.

When Mr. Tyndall "abandoned all disguise," and made a "confession" to relieve his burdened mind, he must have anticipated the sensation with which his words would be met. It was, in fact, the boldest challenge which English-speaking theologians and philosophers had ever received from the materialist and atheist side. Naturally enough, they responded to it with unexampled promptness and unanimity. Protestants and Catholics, churchmen and dissenters, individuals, official persons and religious bodies sprung to the defense of truths common to every form of Christianity, which had been assailed in the discourse. Apart from all theological bias, his speculative opinions and his attempted history of scientific inquiry have been sharply criticized as erroneous, unfair, and betraying ignorance of well-known facts. (See Mr. Davidson's article in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, St. Louis, Oct. 1874.) Mr. Tyndall's own friends have admitted that he misused the occasion, which was a purely scientific one, to drag in discussion upon theological subjects. No wonder he has felt himself called upon to reply once and again to his numerous, able, and importunate critics. And so we have before us, in connection with the seventh edition of the address, two pieces of apologetic writing as curious as the original address itself.

The first of these "prefaces," in point of time, appeared within a month after the delivery of the address (September 15th), so soon did the writer feel driven to the work of explanation and apology. The second preface (first in order as printed) appeared some two or three months later (Dec. 5, 1874). Rising from the perusal of both of these papers, one cannot fail, we think, to be struck with the difference of their tone towards religion. Neither of them undertakes to deny the charge of atheism and materialism from the point of view of his critics. Speaking, in the earliest preface, of the resolution of the Presbytery of Belfast, in which he is charged with "ignoring the existence of God, and advocating pure and simple materialism," he says: "Had the possessive pronoun 'our' preceded 'God,' and had the words, 'what we consider,' preceded 'pure,' this statement would have been objectively true; but to make it so, this qualification is required." In like manner he speaks of a Roman Catholic antagonist. He says: "I do not

fear the charge of atheism, nor should I even disavow it in reference to any definition of the Supreme which he or his order would be likely to frame."

Nevertheless, the first and briefer preface shows a disposition, if not to retract or to soften the positions of the Belfast address, yet to couple with it a certain shade of regret and a suggestion of possible error, arising from a temporary weakness, to be repented of, which is entirely absent from the hard tone and obstinate re-assertions of the later and longer preface. One cannot but picture Mr. Tyndall as, in the first preface, aware that he had trespassed, and desirous of making some reparation to the theistic feeling of the community, which he had undiguisedly assailed; while in the second, he makes the impression of one who has repented of his repentance and gone back to his error. That earlier statement contained the admission that the address was written, "under some disadvantages, in the Alps, and sent by installments to the printer."

It also contains the following remarkable paragraph: "In connection with the charge of atheism, I would make one remark. Christian men are proved by their writings to have their hours of weakness and of doubt as well as their hours of strength and of conviction, and men like myself share, in their own way, these variations of mood and tense. Were the religious views of many of my assailants the only alternative ones, I do not know how strong the claims of materialism upon my allegiance would be. Probably they would be very strong. But as it is, I have noted, during years of self-observation, that it is not in hours of clearness and vigor that this doctrine commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought, it ever dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell and of which we form a part."

In this avowal, it is certainly conceded that the writer was conscious of at least occasional phases of experience and mental tendency, which he would admit to be atheistic from his own point of view. And, certainly, if he ever *gave utterance* to an atheistic view of the universe, it was in the Belfast address, when he declared himself to be throwing off all disguise, and to be making a solemn confession, *i. e.*, in regard to the all-potency of matter, independently of divine interposition.

Naturally, therefore, this extract from the September preface has been regarded in the light of a recantation of that confession, as proof of a reaction in his own soul from the melancholy extreme of that heathen philosophy which denied an intelligent creator and governor of the universe, and made matter eternal and fate supreme. Such a view belonged to his hours of weakness and doubt. Not in a season of clearness and vigor did those doctrines of the Belfast address commend themselves to the varying and sensitive soul of the author; an access of stronger and healthier thought would have dissolved them, like the beam of heat sent through the crystalline edifice of ice in his experiments on molecular action at Manchester.

Charity to Mr. Tyndall disposes us to take this view of the September preface. It was only the natural recoil, we thought, which every mind, not utterly seared and perverted, must sooner or later experience from the hopeless and dreadful abyss of atheism. The natural aversion of the fallen heart from God was represented in the address; the deeper nature—shall we call it—which clings to God, and which recognizes the soul's relationship to the father of all, asserted itself in the September preface.

We are confirmed in this opinion by the very considerable changes which have been made in the address as it has passed through successive editions, the seventh of which now lies before us. The first noticeable change is at the foot of page 68 (Appleton's Ed.), where, at the close of the imaginary argument of Bishop Butler, the writer adds to the address as delivered, "I hold the Bishop's reasoning to be unanswerable, and his liberality to be worthy of imitation." Next is an omission of four sentences, to be found on page 9 of the *Tribune's* pamphlet edition, in which the objections of theologians to the claims of unformed sciences are characterized with great severity; for example: "When first broached, these verities of science [*sic*] found loud-tongued denunciators." These theologians were also compared to thistles, "scattering their germs abroad and reproducing their kind, ready to play again the part of their intellectual progenitors, to show the same virulence, the same ignorance, to achieve for a time the same success, and finally to suffer the same inexorable defeat." Not only is this tiresome pseudo-scientific cant against theologians

wisely struck out, but the following more surprising utterance, which has as much concentrated godlessness as anything in the entire address: "Surely, the time must come at last when human nature, in its entirety, whose legitimate demands it is admitted science alone can satisfy, will find expositors and interpreters of a different stamp from those rash and ill-informed persons who have been hitherto so ready to hurl themselves against every new scientific revelation, lest it should endanger what they are pleased to consider theirs."

All this has disappeared, as well it might, for it is Mr. Tyndall himself who has more than once pointed to another sphere of man's nature quite beyond the province of science to satisfy. From other parts of the discourse have also disappeared those needless vaunts of scientific courage in the face of imagined storms of persecution, which makes us rather wonder whether the scientific cuticle of our day has not grown thin and sensitive and timorous of criticism far more rapidly than theologians have grown charitable.

But, like most over-sensitive people, these men have more than their share of self-esteem. Mr. Tyndall has added a long paragraph to the address, as spoken (which appears on page 89 of Appleton's edition), in which he describes the "true man of science" as if he were a being of superior mold, raised quite above the infirmities of those blind believers whom he is called upon to refute. "There is in the true man of science," he says, "a wish stronger than the wish to have his belief upheld, namely, the wish to have them true. And this stronger wish causes him to reject the most plausible support, if he has reason to suspect that it is vitiated by error." This is very noble, very worthy to be held up as the ideal character of all investigators of truth, but when it is claimed as the peculiarity of any one class of men on the face of the earth, we smile, and put the claim to the account of the vanity of its authors. In fact, there is reason to doubt whether, in this Belfast address, from beginning to end, Mr. Tyndall has appeared in the character of "the true man of science" at all. He has been entertaining his hearers largely with his beliefs, and seems to have been content all through with "plausible support" instead of scientific demonstration.

Perhaps the most significant change made in later editions



will bring out this unscientific type of the address more clearly. It occurs in the remarkable sentence referred to in the commencement of this article, and around which very much of the interest of the general public in the address, and very much of its controversy, has revolved. That sentence, as originally delivered, was as follows: "Abandoning all disguise, the confession I feel bound to make to you is, that I prolong the vision backward across the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that matter—which we, in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its creator, have covered with opprobrium—the promise and potency of every form and quality of life." (*Tribune* Ed., p. 14.) As corrected, the sentence reads: "Believing, as I do, in the continuity of nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intelligent necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that matter—which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium—the promise and potency of all terrestrial life." (Appleton's Edit., pp. 88–89.)

Here, evidently, the character of the strictly scientific man is dropped, and that of the speculator is avowed instead. In place of experimental demonstration, we have "intellectual necessity." This was not difficult to make out from the first form of the statement, but it is too obtrusive to be overlooked in the second. The boundary of experimental evidence is expressly said to be crossed; we are altogether out of range of all scientific tests when we predicate such marvelous capacities of "that matter."

The reader will not fail to mark the very great differences in the tone and spirit of the two editions of this memorable confession; in fact, in its second form, it is no longer a confession. It is no longer "an abandonment of disguise;" no longer a confession of faith wrung from him by inward pressure. So modestly is it now put, that we doubt whether the world would have much more than heard of the Belfast address if this had been the original form of its principal declaration. Instead of ostentatiously proclaiming the acme of a most distinguished scientific man's daring, and implying the anticipa-

tion of a universal response from outraged Christendom ; instead of the utterly repulsive idea of "every form and quality of life"—divine and human, vegetable and animal, terrestrial and cosmical—being derived from matter, we have the level prose of ordinary statement, in which the extra-scientific opinion of the author is limited to the possible material origin of every form of *terrestrial* life. A similar correction is made in a subsequent portion of the address, where "the insoluble mystery," by which "life is evolved, and mind unfolded from their prepotent elements," is greatly emended by the reading "life *on earth* is evolved." The doctrine that remains is bad enough and unchristian enough, but as it does not discard, but only thrusts back, the creative act, it is no longer necessarily atheistic, and we cannot help regarding these latter alterations as designedly made out of deference to the theistic sentiment, and as thus to be classed with the September preface in the view which we have taken of Mr. Tyndall's state of mind at that time.

Of the second preface (first as printed), we cannot take so favorable a view. It seems to have been written in one of those less sound and healthy "variations of mood and tense," which, in the September preface, we were warned to expect in Mr. Tyndall. Much of it is occupied in showing the hostility of the Romish Church to science, and in settling personal accounts with some of his leading critics. Its deficiency from a theistic point of view is not only the absence of any frank avowal on the subject, which Mr. Tyndall seems studiously to avoid ; but the unreserved declaration, that the idea of creative power intruding into any series of phenomena is opposed to the very spirit of science. "The assumption of such a power," he says, "to account for special phenomena, has always been a failure." And by "special phenomena," he means the appearance of life and living things on the earth. "How were they introduced?" he asks. "Was life implicated in the nebulae—as part, it may be, of a vaster and wholly incomprehensible life ; or is it the work of a Being standing outside the nebulae, who fashioned it as a potter does his clay, but whose own origin and ways are equally past finding out? As far as the eye of science has hitherto ranged through nature, no intrusion of purely creative power into any series of phenomena has ever been observed. The assumption of such a power to account for

special phenomena has always proved a failure. It is opposed to the very spirit of science, and I, therefore, assumed the responsibility of holding up, in contrast with it, that method of nature which it has been the vocation and triumph of science to disclose, and in the application of which we can alone hope for further light. Holding, then, that the nebulæ and all subsequent life stand to each other in the relation of the germ to the finished organism, I re-affirm here—not arrogantly or defiantly, but without a shade of indistinctness—the position laid down in Belfast. . . . The scientific man will be the last to dogmatize upon the subject, for he knows best that certainty is here, for the present, unattainable. His refusal of the creative hypothesis is *less an assertion of knowledge than a protest against the assumption of knowledge*, which must long, if not forever, lie beyond us, and the claim to which is the source of manifold confusion upon it.”

There is no evidence, he says, of creation except the Book of Genesis, and that “has no voice on scientific questions. It is a poem, not a scientific treatise.”

Thus, Mr. Tyndall puts himself on record not only as thrusting back to a remote era, but as discarding, the idea of a creation; consequently, he must abandon the ground of theism. He does not wish to dogmatize, yet he dogmatically asserts that the “assumption of creative power” is “opposed to the very spirit of science.” Again, he says, “certainty is here, for the present, unattainable.” Yet, in the Belfast address, he claims that it is “by an intellectual necessity that he crosses the boundary of experimental evidence, and discerns in matter the promise and potency of every form of life.” He “does not dogmatize,” but he disposes of the book of Genesis by thrusting it out of court—by declaring it a poem! He claims to have a mind open to conviction, yet he asserts that believers in creation have no other authority than this book for their belief. Has he never heard of any “intellectual necessity” besides that for his own side of the question? Is he blind to the powerful and universal necessity of the human mind for just the very conception which he undertakes to discredit? Does “intellectual necessity” weigh so much with him, that it can carry him where, confessedly, he is without a particle of scientific evidence to sustain him? and yet, is not this same sort of necessity to be

recognized as a great and a living fact, enabling and constraining mankind, almost as a unit, to see the proof of the existence of moral, intelligent, infinite first-cause, as the plainest and most striking fact in the world of matter and of mind? Is "the intellectual necessity" of a knot of materialistic speculators anything more than a personal or a professional idiosyncrasy, compared with that commanding universal instinct, which will have a God, true or false, and which, if it does not find a true Book of Beginning, will invent one? We venture to affirm that there is no law of Mr. Tyndall's own intellectual being that requires him to set aside first-cause, or that forces upon him, as an intellectual necessity, the eternity of matter, or its all-sufficiency to produce its own changes, or to develop from itself all the phenomena of life and thought and consciousness and morality. The vacillating tone of his lecture and emendations and prefaces disproves the existence of such established convictions.

In the recently published posthumous essays of John Stuart Mill, there are two which stand in marked contrast to each other: "The Utility of Religion" and "Theism." The former seems designed to vindicate the melancholy impression made upon his youthful mind by the atheistic teachings of his father, and might, with equal or greater propriety, have been entitled, "The Uselessness and Injuriousness of Religion in General, and of the Evangelical Type of Christian Belief in Particular." Not only are the views of Mr. Mill narrow and bigoted, as might be expected from his education, but they reveal often a complete ignorance of the common defenses of the orthodox faith. His treatment of the problem of evil under the government of God is crude, puerile, and shallow. He knows nothing, apparently, of the approximate solution of the problem which the tyro in moral philosophy draws from the bare fact of the existence of finite moral beings. Such, as far as we can see, there cannot be, without the possibility at least of sin and fall and all its evil consequences.\* He never caught a glimpse of the profound

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\* The late Gerrit Smith, although maintaining his profession of Christianity to the last, held views of the immoral tendencies of certain orthodox doctrines very similar to these extravagant opinions of John Stuart Mill. They appeared in his "Letter to Albert Barnes," in 1868, from which arose a correspondence of profound interest between those distinguished men, on "Sin and Suffering in the Universe." Yet Mr.

ethical meaning of the Book of Job, in which the uses of suffering, in the discipline and development of the imperfect righteousness of the best of human characters, are set forth with all the richness of language and fertility of invention and singleness of aim of the highest type of poetry.

However, it was appointed to Mr. Mill himself to undergo no small share of these chastisements, and, all unconsciously to himself, he may have profited by their teachings. His wife, for whom he felt an affection more nearly approaching worship than perhaps anything in his whole experience, was removed from him by death in the fall of 1858. It was before her death (between the years 1850 and 1858, says Miss Taylor, in the Introductory Note) that this essay on "The Utility of Religion" was written. Ten years after that event (1868-70) he composed the essay on "Theism," the last of the Posthumous Essays. So different is its spirit and, in several instances, its specific declarations, from those of the essay which preceded it, that his step-daughter, Miss Taylor, is constrained to spend a large part of her introductory notice, two pages out of three, in the effort to account for the discrepancy. It is certainly interesting to know that it was "the last considerable work" of the author, and, consequently, that "it shows the latest state of the author's mind—the carefully-balanced result of the deliberations of a lifetime." This is Miss Taylor's opinion of the essay, notwithstanding the fact of which she admonishes us, that it had not undergone "the revision to which, from time to time, he subjected most of his writings before making them public."

In fact, the whole draft of the two essays may be described as mutually contradictory. The first is atheistic; the second is theistic. The first aims to reconcile the reader to dispensing with the idea of religion; the second, by a halting, timorous, and yet careful, analysis, develops the scientific grounds of a possible faith in natural and revealed religion. The first

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Smith's clear head and early familiarity with the grounds and defenses of leading orthodox doctrines saved him from the astonishing crudities of Mr. Mill. In the letter above-mentioned, he says (p. 5): "It is true that man is so made that he can sin, but how low a being would man be if he were of necessity sinless? How far inferior to what he now is? He would be a mere machine, and his going right would no more argue wisdom and goodness in him than does the right-going of a clock argue wisdom and goodness in it."

breathes unmistakable hostility to Christianity—at times it reminds us of the truculence of the bar-room and of the itinerant infidel lecturer; the other sounds a truce, offers the olive branch, and makes reserved but actual advances to the position the writer had been so bitterly assailing before.

In the first essay, following the hint given him by his father, Mr. Mill applauds the doctrine of the Manicheans (a good and an evil principle, dividing the government of the world between them). He says (*Three Essays*, Am. Ed. p. 116): “One only form of belief in the supernatural—one only theory respecting the origin and government of the universe—stands wholly clear, both of intellectual contradiction and of moral obliquity, . . . the doctrine of the Manicheans.”

In the second essay, on the contrary, he asserts that Monotheism is the only Theism which can claim for itself any footing on scientific ground. (*Three Essays*, p. 133; comp. also, p. 186.)

It is freely conceded in this *Essay on Theism*, that “Science contains nothing repugnant to the supposition that every event which takes place results from a specific volition of the presiding power, provided that this power adheres in its particular volitions to general laws laid down by itself” (p. 136). Widely different is this from Mr. Tyndall’s labored attempt to prove that science excludes the idea of a Creator and Preserver of the universe. Even the reservation, with which Mr. Mill closes the above statement, seems to be withdrawn at a later stage of the argument, where the credibility of miracles is discussed (p. 232).

This admission introduces the main argument of the essay, viz., whether there is sufficient evidence to prove “the creation and government of nature by a sovereign will?” It is in entire accord with the philosophical prejudices instilled into his mind, that he can appreciate none of the deductive arguments for the being of a God; that he seems utterly unconscious of any metaphysical necessity for a first cause; that he denies the general consent of mankind to the doctrine, and argues against any and every form of intuitive knowledge of the divine existence in the human mind. To be sure, in this last position he is able to quote as high authority, on the theistic side, as Sir William Hamilton. “Whatever relates to

God," he says, in another place,\* "I hold, with Sir William Hamilton, to be matter of inference; I would add of inference *à posteriori*." Then passing beyond Sir William's position, he proceeds to argue that a knowledge of the infinite (in the concrete) can be and is reached by that method. He thus appears rather as a defender of the common idea, that the infinite God, in some true sense, is known by the mind. Whether this idea, gained *à posteriori*, is to be regarded as having a corresponding reality outside the mind any more than the *à priori* notion, we are not informed.

But the most surprising feature of Mr. Mill's attempt to discredit the *à priori* argument is his explanation of its continued existence in the world, in spite of the absence of all adequate grounds for its support. He regards it as an instance of the absurdity of assuming that, in the order of the universe, whatever is desirable is true. It is "a *naïf* expression of the tendency of the human mind to believe what is agreeable to it." Instead of the belief in God being a fact which man cannot shake off, in spite of his natural distaste for the idea, according to Mr. Mill, he likes it so much that he has actually formed it without adequate ground! Nothing is clearer throughout this whole volume, than that the author himself is utterly without that fine moral sensibility, that awakened conscience, which, under the teachings of the gospel and the Holy Spirit, reveals to us the deep dislike of the natural man to God.

It is when Mr. Mill reaches the argument from Marks of Design for the Being of a God, that he speaks like a man who is at home. "We now, at last," he says, "reach an argument of a really scientific character, which does not shrink from scientific tests, but claims to be judged by the established canons of induction" (p. 167). Mr. Mill applies these canons most rigorously to the argument, as stated by Paley; holds the argument closely to experience, declares it amounts only to the inferior kind of inductive evidence, called analogy, and that it can never be equal in validity to a real induction (pp. 168, 169.) Yet, a moment after (pp. 169 and 170), he gives a

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\* Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, New York, 1874, Vol. 1, p. 48.

different shape to the arrangement; says the previous view "does not do full justice to the evidence," and points out the fact of nature's arrangements *conspiring to an end*, as constituting an inductive argument. "This," he now says, "I think is undeniable." Selecting the eye as an illustration, he argues that, by induction of particulars, under the "Method of Agreement," we are brought to the conclusion that it is the work of an intelligent, designing will.

With an expression of regret (is it mere Attic courtesy, or does it reveal a slight improvement in his own state of mind?) he sees this argument for creative forethought in the formation of the eye diminished in conclusiveness by the principle of the "Survival of the Fittest." The reality of such a principle, we are told, cannot be doubted, though its adequacy to account for such truly admirable combinations as some of those in nature is still, and will probably long remain, problematical. The theory, if admitted, would be in no way inconsistent with creation. "But it must be acknowledged that it would greatly attenuate the evidence for it. Leaving this remarkable speculation to whatever fate the progress of discovery may have in store for it, I think it must be allowed that, in the present state of our knowledge, the adaptations in nature afford a large balance of probability in favor of creation by intelligence."

With all his deductions and extenuations, Mr. Mill has thus conceded to the argument, as it now stands—for the existence not only of a God, but for a creator—a *large balance of probability*. An accumulation of probabilities reaching to moral certainty, not to demonstration, is all that natural theology can give us. The argument for design, doubtless from design, is not compulsory, but such as is adopted to influence beings endowed with moral sense and with common sense. For them "a large balance of probability" should be and is enough, at least in the sphere of natural theology. What may be needed more is furnished in the Evidences of Revelation.

In turning to this part of the subject (Part IV., p. 212), Mr. Mill makes the remark, that "the indications of the creator and of his attributes, which we are able to find in nature, . . . are sufficient to give to the supposition of a revelation a standing point, which it would not otherwise have had; it has not to



prove the very existence of the being from whom it professes to come." His characteristic narrowness and insensibility to any form of *à priori*, or deductive, mode of thought, appears in his rejection of the internal evidence of a revelation, except as having negative weight. It may be of a character to discredit—it can never establish—the superhuman origin of the document. He confines himself entirely to the external evidence, *i. e.*, to miracles.

Here, as in his logic, he puts himself upon ground entirely different from that of the unbelieving naturalists of our day. Hume's argument against miracles, he admits, may be conclusive with them. "But it is far from being equally so when the existence of a being who created the present order of nature—and, therefore, may well be thought to have power to modify it—is accepted as a fact, or even as a probability, resting on independent evidence. Once admit a God, and the production, by his direct volition, of an effect, which, in any case, owed its origin to his creative will, is no longer a purely arbitrary hypothesis to account for the fact, but must be reckoned with as a serious possibility." It is a point which may be settled by evidence in the affirmative. Whether the evidence in case of the Christian miracles was sufficient is the true question. Mr. Mill is not willing to admit its sufficiency; he will only go so far as to say that "there is nothing so inherently or absolutely incredible in this supposition (of a revelation attested by miracles) as to preclude any one from hoping that it may, perhaps, be true."

But we hasten to lay before our readers the "general result" of the discussion, as presented by the writer. It is here especially, that the tone of the essay is in contrast with that which precedes it, and here we cannot fail to detect a hopeful progress in the author's mode of conceiving his subject. Before, religion was a foe of good—worse than useless in the world. Now, it appears to him "that the indulgence of hope with regard to the government of the universe and the destiny of man after death—while we recognize as a clear truth, that we have no ground for more than a hope—is legitimate and philosophically defensible. The beneficial effect of such a hope is far from trifling. It makes life and human nature a far greater thing to the feelings, and gives greater strength as well as

greater solemnity to all the sentiments which are awakened in us by our fellow creatures, and by mankind at large. The benefit consists less in the presence of any specific hope than in the enlargement of the general scale of the feelings, the loftier aspirations being no longer in the same degree checked and kept down by a sense of the insignificance of human life " (pp. 249, 250).

We wonder if Mr. Mill, in penning these sentences, thought of that period in his own life, so candidly and graphically described in his *Autobiography* (chap. 5 : " A crisis in my mental history"), when he seemed suddenly, and without any afflicting experience, " to have nothing left to live for." Mr. Thomas Hughes, M. P., explains this crisis, in his own way, as the result of a life without any " back-ground of God " in it. Mr. Mill seems to have acquired at least the premises for a similar conclusion.

He continues by ascribing to religion the principal share in maintaining among men " a most important," an " infinitely precious exercise of the imagination ; " indeed, " human excellence greatly depends upon the sufficiency of the provision made for its exercise." " This consists of the familiarity of the imagination with the conception of a morally perfect being, and the habit of taking the approbation of such a being as the standard by which to regulate our characters and lives." Even when the being is conceived of as merely imaginary, this beneficial effect is quite possible. " But religion, since the birth of Christianity, has rendered the special service of inculcating the belief, that our highest conceptions of combined wisdom and goodness exist in the concrete, in a living being, who has his eyes on us and cares for our good. Through the darkest and most corrupt periods, Christianity has raised this torch on high—has kept this object of veneration and imitation before the eyes of man " (pp. 250, 231).

As the essay draws to a close, its tone continues gradually to rise, until one cannot help believing that the long-fettered mind of this most exceptionally trained Englishman was working its way to truer freedom and to better light. There is almost a positively Christian tone in many of the sentences of the following paragraphs :

" Above all, the most valuable part of the effect on the

character which Christianity has produced, by holding up in a divine person a standard of excellence and a model of imitation, is available even to the absolute unbeliever, and can never be lost to humanity. For it is Christ—it is the God incarnate; more than the God of the Jews, or of Nature, who, being idealized, has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind. And whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; an unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. Who among his disciples, or among the proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the gospel? Certainly not the fisherman of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncracies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they all professed that it was derived, from the higher source."

[We omit the sentences which show that Mr. Mill had not yet attained an insight into the significance of John's Gospel.]

About the life and sayings of Jesus he continues, "There is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. Nor would it be easy, now even, for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue, from the abstract to the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life. When to this we add, that to the rational skeptic it remains a possibility that Christ actually was what he supposed himself to be—not God, but a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God, to lead mankind to truth and virtue; we may well conclude that the influences of religion on the character, which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving, and what they lack in direct strength, as compared with those of a firmer belief, is more than compensated by the greater truth and rectitude of the morality they sanction."

With all the grave defects of the *Essay on Theism*, some of which we have passed over lightly, or without mention, we are inclined to regard it as one of the most remarkable and significant of all of the author's productions. We are heartily glad that Mr. Mill lived long enough to conceive and write it. It is a contribution, real, though slight, towards undoing the great mischiefs of his earlier writings, and of the general drift of his example during a long, able, and influential career. We think these last words of Mr. Mill, and the September Preface and Emendations of Mr. Tyndall, may be classed together as suggestive of a vacillation and a reaction in the minds of the leaders of the unbelieving speculation of our day from their advanced positions. But Mr. Tyndall has a greater work to do in that direction than Mr. Mill had. May both light and opportunity be granted to him to do it.