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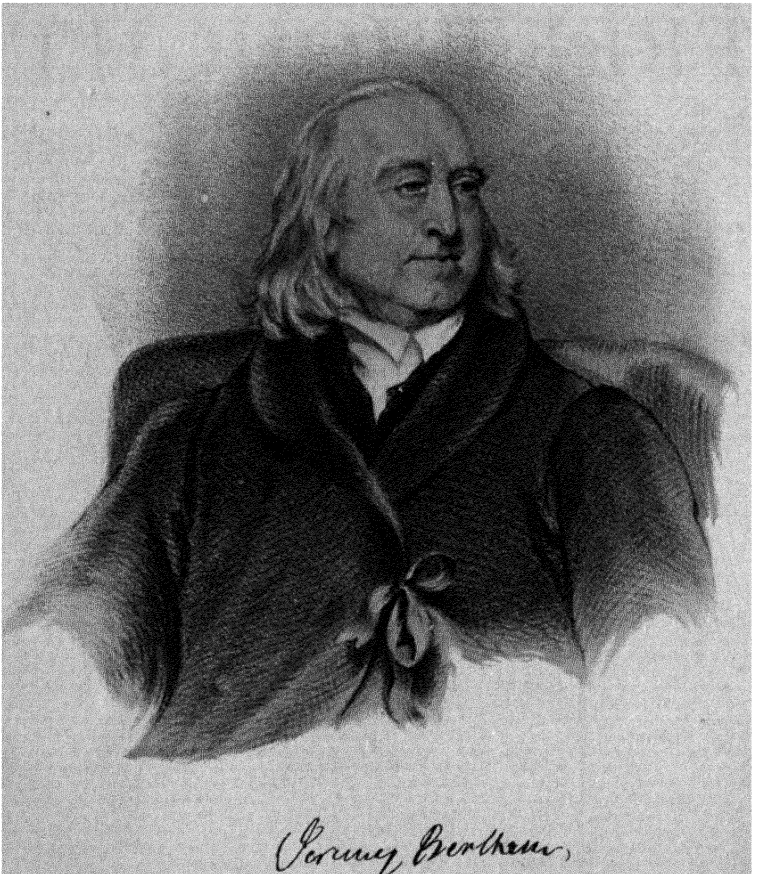

Jeremy Bentham,

JEREMY BENTHAM

A HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY

J. M. ROBERTSON

(AUTHOR OF "A SHORT HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT," "A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY," "A SHORT HISTORY OF MORALS," "THE EVOLUTION OF STATES," ETC.)

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THE PASSING OF ORTHODOXY

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PREFACE

THE present volume is a new work—a rewriting, with manifold expansion, of the short section on the Nineteenth Century at the close of 'A Short History of Freethought' (3rd ed., 2 vols., 1915). As was explained in the second edition, the relatively scanty treatment of the century in which freethought had made its most extensive progress was partly due to the knowledge that the author's friend, the late Alfred W. Benn, had been long engaged on a comprehensive 'History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century.' In the case of the third edition, in which the nineteenth century section was expanded but still scanted, the issue of Mr. Benn's valuable work (2 vols., 1906) was pointed to as largely making good the deficiency.

There had also operated, however, the further consideration, which may now be avowed, that the title of 'Short History' had begun to seem dubiously applicable to a treatise which in its third edition more than trebled the size of the first. That this (remediable) obstacle did not excuse a visibly imperfect historical performance, justly complained of as such by friendly critics, was fairly clear to the author at the time; and the possession of some degree of long-lacked leisure has latterly enabled him to make a measure of amends by this book. It will, it is hoped, ultimately form the concluding part of a revised 'History of Freethought' that will renounce the vain pretension of the term 'Short'—though, as the considerate student will probably admit, its procedure will inevitably remain concise, relatively to the vastness of the theme.

The reasons for this attempt at completion of an inadequately finished task can be shortly put. The original 'Short History' sought to trace the rise and progress of freethought throughout

the world; and though Mr. Benn was exceptionally well qualified to do that for the nineteenth century, he chose to restrict his survey, substantially, to English thought and literature. This volume seeks to cover, on a necessarily smaller scale, the foreign ground, in connection with a fresh survey of the English field covered in Mr. Benn's treatise.

It is in no sense a rival work. To read that remarkably able and interesting book was not to be tempted to compete with it; and the student would be ill-advised who should take this as a substitute. Broadly speaking, the other is a searching study of the process of philosophic and religious thought involved or embodied in the rise of rationalism and the decline of theology in the period dealt with. The present volume is a more excursive yet more cursory record of the lines of movement involved in the general processus, noting some which the more massive history does not seek to present, and applying to the whole a different arrangement.

There is, of course, no serious difference of import in the terms 'Freethought' and 'Rationalism' as titles of such histories, though Mr. Benn suggests a fine distinction. They cover, and are intended to cover, the same main mental movements and tendencies, and they are alike terms of convenience, established by generally recognized expediency.[1] To substitute the term 'Unbelief' would be a quite illicit perpetuation of the paralogism of 'Infidelity.' It is only in respect of the special verbal implications of 'Freethought'—implications of obstacles to freedom and of battle with these—that a history so labelled necessarily tends to make surveys which a historian of Rationalism could fitly dispense with, though Mr. Benn's wide and exact knowledge of history could well have supplied them. The present writer, indeed, is fully conscious that a record of the struggles of freethought in other countries can be adequately written only by natives, or by students specially intimate with the culture history of each. Of some countries he cannot even pretend to give any account in this

[1] See, below, the "Note as to Terms." It is to be observed that the late Lord Oxford, an authoritative "purist" as to English, gave the title *Some Phases of Freethought in England in the Nineteenth Century* to his Essex Hall Lecture of 1925.

connection, their literatures having had little or no general influence on the European reading world outside; of some others he can give only meagre sketches. And until such histories are produced in all countries, any general survey such as the present can but serve to show that the movement of thought was general, while tracing it in critical detail only for those whose literatures are most widely known.

The adequate general history, it may be hoped, will be produced when the movement is everywhere separately recorded. It might usefully be preceded by a Bibliography of Freethought Literature, which alone could even nominally commemorate all the work done. In the meantime, the present survey may serve as partly supplementary to the history by Mr. Benn, alike as to English-speaking and other nations. Both kinds of history, finally, lie under limitations which must be duly allowed for. They cannot be detailed histories of science, or even of special scientific doctrines; as little can they be adequate histories of theology, still less of politics; though they must take constant account of both science and theology and some heed of politics. And though Mr. Benn's work goes a long way to being a conspectus of modern philosophy, in which he was as competent as in the ancient, the present treatise professes to follow philosophy, like the sciences, only inasmuch as it broadly connects with the conflict between rationalism and religion.

It is in short a compendious history of the mutual and social reactions of critical freethought, science, and religion, as indicated in books and movements, doctrines, changes of theological thought, creed and temper, social usages, and the general countenance of the changing age. That it should differ at times from Mr. Benn's on minor points of fact and generalization was inevitable; and one has the less scruple about raising such points because of a pleasant recollection of the perfect candour and amenity with which, in life, Mr. Benn met all criticism of details in his work.[1]

[1] It was after he had vigorously criticized Spencer in *Mind* that Spencer recommended him as a competent person to write an article on the completed *Synthetic Philosophy*. (Duncan's *Life of Spencer*, pp. 401–2.)

Such a history, to be useful to the general reader for whom it is intended, is under obligation to be something more than a *hortus siccus* of analyses of books and doctrines. To be in any just sense a history at all, it must seek to recover something of the play of life, the endless reactions of circumstances, personalities, movements, theories, which constitute the mental state of a nation at any time. And to do this not only with strict observance of the equally exacting duties of equity and accuracy, but with attention to the historic principle of sequence—the special difficulty of all culture-history—is here an intricate task.

The miscellaneity of the subject matter compels the would-be historian to set up as it were "traffic controls" and "one-way streets," whereby different processes of causation may be ordered and collated. Or, to change the metaphor, he must prospect through a densely covered ground by different routes, so made as, at times, to cross, and yet ultimately to converge. But no metaphor can express the facts that in the mental life of the civilized world there are constant exchanges of influence between nations and between different movements of thought and action within each nation; and, yet again, that on all the social levels there are as it were large pools of opinion, which remain little affected by winds or currents of doctrine.

It is inevitable that in a progression by way of recording debate and polemic, criticism and resistance, the advance of thought should often be figured as a continuous battle, in which one flag steadily gains against another. But the resultant conception, for the reflective student, is one of perpetual transmutation, the flags themselves, so to speak, being progressively re-made, as the issues are reconsidered. And if the advancing cause has most to forgive, its very doctrine, as finally understood, most clearly dictates the dispassionate conception of a law of evolving reason as distinct from a mere temper of antagonism between light-seeking and obscurantism. The total tide sets up a conception of human evolution where the play of the waves gives but a notion of mere strife.

Hence the use of a detailed historical treatment as against, or

rather in concurrence with, a summarization of results. To know broadly the process of causation in terms of the personal as well as the doctrinal aspects is a necessary part of the knowledge of social and individual pyschology in the field of opinion. The history must, perforce, be itself critical and polemical, as proceeding on a general judgment of truth and of tendency. It is over specific doctrines and beliefs that men contest. The work, therefore, might in the opinion of some demand the title of 'A Critical History.' But is not all history that is more than annals necessarily critical? The risk of partiality cannot bar the need for judgment. For those, however, to whom debate is apt to become tedious, some relief has been sought by the device of printing in indented sections of the text special discussions, too long for footnotes, which seem necessary to a due handling of certain issues for the more critical student. Apart from these, the narrative can be read continuously.

It is hardly necessary to say that this, like every other kind of culture-history, owes much to the labours of many previous surveyors. These obligations, it is hoped, are in general duly indicated in the footnotes. But a sense of the *camaraderie* of research dictates a special acknowledgment of the helpfulness of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and, further, of the great assistance supplied to the author by the Biographical Dictionaries of Freethinkers compiled by the late J. M. Wheeler and by Mr. Joseph McCabe.

By such aids is constructed a kind of conspectus such as seems to be lacking, so far, in other literatures, and yet desirable on various grounds. When all is said, however, the volume remains but a sketch of a period of complex and world-wide evolution, such as may, it is hoped, be of service to later historians with larger leisure. Such a task, indeed, ought to be undertaken by a group of specialists. The author has felt the same thing in regard to several of his undertakings; but, having no such influence or facilities as are necessary to the fulfilment of a scheme of collaboration, he has striven to apply what knowledge and labour he could muster, where others have not come forward. Thus far,

in point of fact, academic collaboration, in such undertakings as the Cambridge Modern History and the Cambridge History of English Literature, has not produced entirely satisfactory results; "team-work" in these matters being a difficult ideal, though a clear advance is visible in the Cambridge Ancient History, as in the History of France superintended by M. Lavisse.

But for such a history as the present there is no prospect of academic collaboration in England or anywhere else; and the author may accordingly hope to be absolved of presumption for attempting a task to which he has been led alike by his own mental interests and by the apparent needs of the historical situation, however inadequately qualified by range of knowledge. One of the large difficulties is that of duly scanning the vast mass of biography for the century. In point of fact, that biography has often been unfaithful. When the earlier sheets had been printed, the writer discovered (1) that by inattention to Mr. Buxton Forman's standard edition of Keats he had missed a note to the effect that a few lines in one of Keats's letters, referring to "the pious frauds of Religion" in regard to Jesus and the Gospels, "had been desperately garbled in the old version."[1]

Colvin had, of course, given a just general account of Keats's "indefinite" attitude to religion;[2] but in telling how the dying poet finally recognized "the stedfast behaviour of the believer Severn" (whose health was excellent) he has unwittingly supported another mystification. William Sharp, who wrote the Life of Severn (1892), avowed to the present writer that he could not possibly print a number of that genial artist's letters which would certainly have disqualified him, in pious eyes, for the rôle of the model Christian. Truth in such matters is hard to expiscate from the heap of largely garbled record.

At a few points criticism and revision of the parts as serially published have shown reason for correction of what may be termed

[1] *Complete Works of Keats*, edited by H. Buxton Forman, Gowans and Gray ed., 1901, v, 38.

[2] *John Keats, his Life and Poetry, his Friends, Critics, and After Fame*, 1917, pp. 51, 71, 509.

understatements. It has been pointed out, for instance, (2) by an American friend, that the wording of Roosevelt's aspersion of Paine (see p. 58) was not "dirty little atheist" (the form quoted by Conway and also by Mr. and Mrs. Beard in their *Rise of American Civilization*) but "filthy little atheist." A consultation of Roosevelt's *Gouverneur Morris* in the 'American Statesmen' series (1891, p. 289) attests the complete passage, which is worth citing :—

"So the filthy little atheist had to stay in prison, 'where he amused himself with publishing a pamphlet against Jesus Christ.' There are infidels and infidels; Paine belonged to the variety—whereof America possesses at present one or two shining examples—that apparently esteems a bladder of dirty water as the proper weapon with which to assail Christianity. It is not a type that appeals to the sympathy of an onlooker, be said onlooker religious or otherwise."

If there be any onlooker who is appealed to by the unclean invective of Roosevelt he is hardly likely to be hailed by religionists as a tolerable "religious" type, and others may be left to speak for themselves, as some Americans have done with fit severity. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that of the two descriptions of Paine's work (of which the first appears to be quoted from Morris) the former exhibits complete inacquaintance with the book, and the second is so ignorantly and ignobly false as to leave no loophole of excuse open for Roosevelt. Paine's attitude to Jesus, as all his readers know, was highly encomiastic.

"Nothing that is here said," he writes in an early page of Part I of *The Age of Reason*—after describing the historic system as a development from heathen mythology—"can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the *real* character of Jesus. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached .....by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any."

The devout theist Paine was in fact, like Voltaire, a forerunner of the now numerous Neo-Unitarian school; and it is understood that many American and other Christians of that school indignantly repudiate the scurrilous Roosevelt as an exponent of either Christian or any other form of religious feeling.

3. On the other hand, a Unitarian challenge to the statement on p. 3, "Nor was the Unitarian absent from the hunt," has served only to suggest that it was an error of leniency to use that mild expression, and to omit the evidence. That will be found in the summary and citation in Moncure Conway's *Life of Thomas Paine*, 1892, ii, 231. The omission, like the phrasing, was due to a desire to avoid any air of hostility to the Unitarian sect.

4. A more serious, but an accidental, omission occurs in the account of Alexander von Humboldt on pp. 278–9. Details which ought to have been there given as to his freethinking will be found in Wheeler's *Dictionary*.

5. On the freethinking side a discussion has arisen as to the accuracy of the statement on p. 304 that one of G. W. Foote's services to freethought "was the discovery (1898) that by formal establishment as a company the Society could legally receive bequests, a right denied it as a simple propagandist body"; and that "the genius of English law.....now bestowed in terms of 'business' and finance the protection it had refused to an organization aiming simply at the diffusion of truth." This account of the matter, one had understood, represented Foote's own view, which has always been endorsed by Mr. C. A. Watts, who had accepted the record in the text. Mr. Chapman Cohen, however, has pointed out in the *Freethinker* that what really happened was the establishment of a separate "Secular Society Limited," while the National Secular Society stood and stands as it did; and he denies that "the law gave to business what it would not give to propaganda," since the Secular Society does not claim to be commercial. As it nevertheless publishes and sells books, the issue is left obscure.

Mr. Cohen does not here follow the text, which ran: "*in terms of* 'business' and finance"; but that point need not be laboured. On the other hand he objects that the whole statement "hardly does justice to Mr. Foote's acumen in the matter." The author thought he had stressed Foote's acumen in respect of his "discovery." Several qualified freethinkers, however, deny that there was any "discovery"; and Mr. Cohen's argument appears

at this point to coincide with theirs, though he explicitly claims that Foote "gave Freethought in this country its financial charter."

The debate has become elusive; and so far as a common measure can be found for the disputants, it would seem to amount to this:—

a. Before Foote had established the "Secular Society Limited" judges supported all actions by heirs or executors who claimed the annulment of bequests to Freethought bodies as "illegal."

b. The final decision of the House of Lords in the Bowman case (1917) showed that judges had come to regard such bequests as "legal" to the extent of holding that they could not as such be upset at law, even if made to non-incorporated bodies. Judges of the old school might have decided differently.

c. Incorporation, then, was not finally necessary; and, had judges remained at the old standpoint of bigotry, might not have prevented the annulment of such bequests, when called for by heirs or executors, even if made to an incorporated Society.

d. On this view, the result was really brought about by "time" or "change of atmosphere"—forces or factors not commonly conceived as concrete "law."

e. It appears to be conceded, however, that Foote's action, and his public claim to have made bequests safe, withheld heirs and executors from challenging such bequests until time had been given for the judges to rise to a more just and tolerant view of equity and law in the matter.

On this final view, it appears to the present writer, Foote is to be credited with having at least altered the "atmosphere" to such an extent as to give time for the decisive legal pronouncement to embody the civilized and not the traditional temper in such matters. Beyond this analysis and conclusion it does not seem useful to carry the discussion here.

Upon one or two other challenges the author has found no reason for altering his estimate on points of narrative. Not for a moment, however, does he suppose that in so lengthy and so manifold a survey he has escaped inaccuracy. Historical accuracy remains an ideal which the historian can but strive to approach,

and cannot hope completely to attain. He can at best claim only to have made the effort. Adequacy, finally, is a matter of mere approximation. Of many possible charges of oversight, the author feels, one may arise over the name of Volkmar, who deserved notice. And there may well be others.

Fuller research should add much to our historical knowledge. When all is said, however, history is a concept of a manifold general movement, and the attempt that has been made in this volume is to recover that by broad survey. Closer interest may come when standing prejudices have more or less passed away, and the services of all manner of men and women to right thinking are more fully valued.

It remains to give hearty thanks to the various friends who, with the R.P.A. staff, have shared the burden of reading the proofs of the book. All have been signally helpful. To Mr. Marley Denwood the author has been specially indebted for checking the innumerable dates, and correcting many.

Note as to Terms

It may appear anomalous, at first sight, that in a book in which "free will" is treated as a meaningless expression, "freethought" is accepted as a working term for an actual process of judgment and conduct. The explanation and the justification of the apparent anomaly lie in a verbal and logical analysis.

"Free" is a term of relation, of antithesis. It is significant only in mental relation to "unfree," and it takes root and application in regard to human *action*, which may be either free or unfree, in respect of either moral or physical coercion. Inasmuch as "free will" is a universal proposition, logically covering the whole mental field of judgment and choice, it is seen to be really meaningless in that use, since, in the terms of the case, "unfree will" (save in the terms of an inconsistent and irrelevant physiological distinction) is declared not to exist. When the theologian affirms "free will" in predicative connection with his doctrine of Universal Divine Providence, Control, or Immanence, he is deliberately framing a contradiction in terms and in meaning, in order to save his ethic from his theology. He at once affirms and denies Universal Causation, Control, or Immanence—a course possible only to supporters of a doctrine which ultimately defies reason. Logic must for ever repudiate such courses. The term "free" is logically applicable only to modes of human *action* contrastable with "unfree" modes. In regard to a mental world *affirmed* to exhibit *no* "unfree" modes, it has no more significance than "free gravitation."

The term "freethought" is in an entirely different case. It is not a self-cancelling universal predicate. It implies the recognized existence of "unfree

thought" in the sense of dictated opinion, doctrine imposed under menace of penalty or ostracism for dissent. All human history exhibits a chronic revolt of judgment against opinions so dictated. Before "freethought" or "freethinker" came into usage, Protestants had affirmed "the right of private judgment," and thinkers had claimed *libertas philosophandi*. To such claimants it might have been replied that such freedom is inviolable and indestructible: that every man remains free in his own mind to think, whatever dictation goes on outside.

But that reply takes no account of the fact that authoritarian and minatory predication actually paralyses for many the very faculty of judgment, cows and inhibits reflection, and thus creates "unfree thought." Thought, that is to say, can be made relatively unfree by human interference, by intimidation, by social coercion of personality; though at the same time it is notorious that stronger spirits are moved to special activity of thought and predication by the very fact of the dictation, the menace, the coercion. For this reactive energy, which is altruistic as well egoistic, the term "freethought" is found to be a serviceable label, connoting as it does the perpetual process of conflict between sacrosanct and critical opinion. And if the adherent of any religious belief claims, as many have done, to be himself a "free thinker," he has no grievance against the present work, where his case is historically exhibited.

CORRIGENDA

P. 69, line 4. *For* cshemes *read* schemes.

P. 127, middle. *For* § 4 *read* § 5.

P. 135, line 1. *For* Petrie *read* Petre.

P. 144, line 19. For *and* read *und.*

P. 319, line 22. *For* Lacy *read* Sacy.

P. 364, line 19. *For* than *read* that.

P. 398, line 11. *After* regret it, *insert* or.

Pp. 432–3. Foote's "indictment of the religious spirit," here cited, is a quotation from Huxley's *Lay Sermons* (review of *The Origin of Species*).

P. 441, line 18. *For* 1900 *read* 1909.

P. 539, *n.* 3. *For* Thistleton *read* Thiselton.

PART I

THE REIGN OF ORTHODOXY

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS REACTION IN BRITAIN

1. FOR the then progressive countries of the world, the nineteenth century opened on a state of strife in the intellectual as in the political arena. Before the outbreak of the French Revolution every species of freethought was active in various degrees and in different strata, alike in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. By the account of Paley, in 1785, "infidelity" permeated all contemporary literature,[1] and many testimonies supported him, the fact conveyed being that "revealed" religion was now widely impugned. "The eighteenth century," wrote an apologist in 1790,[2] dedicating his work to the Archbishop of Tuam, "has produced a religious revolution in this country. Its commencement was an era of bigotry, its end is an era of toleration." That summary was soon to be falsified.

In France, by the avowal of all censors of the Revolution, that cataclysm had been preceded by a still more active and more general "destructive" criticism of religious belief. The output of freethinking literature there, from 1740 to 1770, increasing in each decade, greatly exceeded anything seen elsewhere; and the partly lessened production from 1770 to 1790 told rather of achievement than of reaction, the later books being increasingly radical. In Germany, though average unscholarly society may have been less affected, the development of radical critical thought had gone even further, as regards philosophy and Biblical criticism; while Bahrdt, by the testimony of his many enemies, carried the movement far into common life. In Italy the preparation for an intellectual revolution was less extensive only in respect of the much weightier checks on the freedom of the press. Educated society there was probably little less freethinking than in France.[3]

2. From 1790 onwards, a difference had begun in England as compared with the other countries, in that there the continuing activity of freethought was met by an increasingly angry resistance, which developed into a long predominance of reaction, alike in the political and in the

[1] *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, Bk. V, ch. ix.
[2] Rev. H. Murray, *Evidences of the Jewish and Christian Revelations*, Dublin, 1790.
[3] Cp. Spalding, *Italy*, 3rd ed. 1845, iii, 19.

intellectual life. Of the Treasonable Practices Bill of 1795 Fox said that under it "Locke would have been exiled for his writings." Political reaction, in fact, primed and fed the intellectual reaction for over half a century, the outcome being that England from 1800 to 1850 was ostensibly a much more religious country than it had been since 1660.

A strong sense of this is expressed in the Introduction supplied by Bishop Wilson of Calcutta in 1829 to the sixteenth English edition of Wilberforce's 'Practical View of Christianity,' which, published in 1797, "came upon the whole world of statesmen and literati and divines quite by surprise," and initiated a general revival of evangelical religion. For the Bishop it marked (in small capitals) "an era in the history of the times." The change in the general attitude to religion in thirty years had been incalculable; and "authors, compilers, translators, travelers, agents, artists, schoolmasters, catechists, missionaries, secretaries, presidents, public speakers.....have been raised up in a remarkable manner to fill their separate posts.....a sure criterion of a divine effusion of mercy on the church."[1] The bishop naturally does not mention that the "raising up" involved the paying of many salaries; but he could justly have taken pride in the extensive raising up of funds for the purpose.

The Bishop, of course, with his sure criterion, saw the process substantially as one of a general return to the Protestant Evangelical conception of religion as an all-pervading influence, rooted in the belief in the saving efficacy of the Sacrifice of Christ. Still, he allows it to be seen that the work of Wilberforce, so widely acceptable as coming from a member of Parliament at once wealthy, pious, and popular, was highly influential "amongst the nobility and gentry," who, so generally indifferent to religion before the Revolution, had come to see in it a valuable force of resistance to revolutionary change.[2]

Such a political causation contrasts significantly with that of a century before. A study of the English polemics of the last decade of the seventeenth century reveals an impulse given to deism by the "priestcraft" of the period.[3] That sequence had been recognized by Sir Matthew Hale soon after the Restoration,[4] when the Church had become the chief agent in the establishment of the doctrine of the divine right of kings on a freshly strong dogmatic basis; and after the Revolution of 1688 the situation became acute. Clerical pretensions ran higher than ever; and the now potent influence of Hobbes wrought with the natural reaction to create among critical politicians an anti-clerical attitude, which as naturally fostered deistic heresy. After the French Revolution the political pressure was in exactly the opposite direction, impelling the

[1] Work cited, ed. 1841, Introd. essay, p. li.
[2] Cp. Mackintosh's Diary note in 1808—*Memoirs*, by his son, i, 408.
[3] See *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England*, etc., rep. 1709.
[4] Cp. Baxter's Appendix to Burnet's Life of Hale; *Burnet's Lives*, ed. 1833, pp. 158–60.

deists of the upper classes to a reconciliation with the Church as an apparent factor for social stability.

3. Thus the path of freethought became newly hard in the England of the opening century. The Church, which in Gibbon's day had figured so poorly in the attempt to discredit his scholarship, began to recover strength not only in learning but in religious zeal, the competition of Wesleyanism forcing on her younger clergy a more serious attitude to their duties and their faith,[1] while the temper of the alarmed upper classes dictated a new vigour of repression, towards the exercise of which they supplied funds. The wealth of those classes, in fact, was at the disposal of the Church to an extent not hitherto seen since the Reformation. There appeared to be no surer way of fighting the new danger of democracy; and Dissent joined hands with the Establishment to enforce orthodoxy. The well-to-do Methodist was almost as prompt a persecutor as the Anglican; nor was the Unitarian absent from the hunt. In a general way, the Anglican vilified the Unitarians and the Dissenters as such. In a common malice they found a new ground of comity.

It is always to be remembered in regard to the struggle between Freethought and Religion that it is mainly a conflict between unsalaried and salaried combatants; between disinterested propaganda, right or wrong, and propaganda always backed by large vested interests. The latter may be perfectly sincere, but, like the functioning of the priest, it is on the side of an endowed institution, collectively rich, broad-bottomed on common prejudice, while the militant freethinker appeals to the more thoughtful few, and is commonly poor, since the possession of wealth is a strong suasive to social conformity, save for eccentrics. Except in respect of the guarded activities of well-placed wise men alive to the need for a gradual correction of common dogmas, the battle is broadly one between unpaid freelances and an army of professional defenders.

There was thus in England, apart from the prior preponderance of average uncritical belief, a host of some twenty thousand more or less educated men whose paid function it was, by tongue and pen, to defend at all points the Sacred Books and their dogmas, and to inflame against all opponents the normal resentment of the religious temper towards gainsayers. The current creed was the endowed creed. Its critics were a (financially) disinterested few, relying only on the appeal to reason, to judgment, in a world where careful thinking is never common, and at a time when fear and danger made it especially scarce. In such a struggle any forward movement on the side of freethought could come only of a force of truth that outwent even prejudice.

Broadly speaking, the systematic propaganda for religion built up

[1] As to the indifferentism and laxity of life of the pre-Revolution clergy, see Miss Charlotte Yonge's *Biographies of Good Women*, 2nd Series, 1865, p. 306. Cp. Dr. John Stoughton, *Religion in England from 1800 to 1850*, 1884, i, introd. pp. xvi, xvii; and Miss G. E. Mitton, *Jane Austen and Her Times*, 1903, ch. iii.

a new orthodoxy. Among the men of letters of the passing generation anything like serious Christian faith had been exceptional. Johnson, Cowper, and Burke stood out in their different ways as welcome witnesses for religious belief. They were valued because they were exceptional among the cultured. In the Life of Malone there appears to be no sign of any religious preoccupation whatever. Gibbon had made the great literary and scholarly success of the last quarter of the century. Porson, who flatly refused to take orders when it meant a much-needed means of livelihood for him, and who was "never heard to utter a mean or licentious sentiment," projects in his talk a "History of the Grand Hum, in a hundred volumes folio," with evident relation to religion.[1] Horne Tooke, priest unfrocked, "believed in a first cause, because every other supposition is *more* absurd"; and held the un-Christian view that "'Do as you would be done by' is a scoundrel and paltry precept. A generous man goes beyond it."[2] These are men reared in the eighteenth century, a pattern not reproduced in the age of reaction, though preserved in some freethinking combatants who lived well into it.

4. The effect of the general pressure is seen in the attitude of public men. Among the sceptics mentioned in Greville's Diary is the celebrated Lord Erskine, who, in 1818, had a dispute with Greville "upon religious subjects one morning, which he finished by declaring his entire disbelief in the Mosaic history."[3] Yet Erskine, after ably defending the publisher of Paine's 'Rights of Man' in 1792, had acted for the Prevention of Vice Society in prosecuting Williams, a bookseller who sold Paine's 'Age of Reason'; upon which occasion he had "delivered a powerful speech in support of the truth of Christianity."[4] Erskine's courage, sometimes signal, is known to have been variable; and his course in 1797 is to be understood as prudential. In 1792 he had defied the Prince of Wales; in 1797 he stood by the flag of religion; and the views privately expressed by him in 1818 were never by him published.

A young freelance was more courageous. In 1814 Thomas Love Peacock, afterwards the friend of Shelley, appended to his satirical ballad *Sir Proteus* a note containing a jeer at "the very Scientific narrative of that most enlightened astronomer and profound cosmogonist Moses."[5] The satiric and flighty form probably averted a prosecution.

5. The courage of Shelley's indignant 'Letter to Lord Ellenborough' in 1812, protesting against the sentencing of Eaton to the pillory and to eighteen months' imprisonment for selling Paine's 'Age of Reason,' Pt. III, was as uncommon as the audacity of his 'Necessity of Atheism' (1811), which was really treated by the university authorities with much more lenity than could reasonably have been expected, even for a rich man's

[1] Rogers's *Recollections*, 1859, pp. 115, 121.
[2] *Id.* pp. 143–5.
[3] *The Greville Memoirs*, ed. 1899, i, 8.
[4] It was really compact of legal, political, and religious claptrap.
[5] Poems, ed. Brimley Johnson, p. 140.

son. By that time juries had become subservient to the regimen of terror. In 1793 the publisher D. I. Eaton had been tried before the Recorder for selling Part II of the 'Rights of Man,' and before Lord Kenyon and a special jury for selling Paine's 'Letter to the Addressers.' In both cases verdicts were given by the juries which amounted to acquittal; and the same thing happened when in 1794 Eaton was tried for inserting something disrespectful to the King in his 'Politics for the People.' But in 1796 he was tried twice for new political publications, whereupon he fled, was outlawed, and lived in America for three and a half years. On his return to England he was arrested, and his property seized; books to the value of £2,500 which he had packed for the American market were burned; and he underwent fifteen months' imprisonment. And still he fought on, translating and publishing freethinking tracts from Helvétius, d'Holbach, and Volney. Pilloried in 1812, he was cheered and fed by the populace. The end was that when in that year he was prosecuted for Houston's *Ecce Homo* the authorities felt constrained to drop the case on the score of his advanced age; and in 1814 he died in poverty. Militant freethought was obviously not a paying career.

6. And still it was in England that freethought was most vigorously promulgated on the popular plane. In the 'thirties Dean Milman speaks of Paley's *Evidences* (1794) as written "during the fiercest heat of battle against the Christian faith."[1] From 1795 onwards Paine's 'Age of Reason' was about as extensively circulated as his 'Rights of Man,' in the teeth of a repression which treated both books as offences against law and order, God and State. The policy of prosecution, started immediately on the appearance of the books, was carried on, as we have seen, far into the new century, with the normal result of inspiriting the resistance and increasing the sale.[2] Bishop Watson's counter-blast, infelicitously entitled 'An Apology for the Bible' (1796), not only introduced Paine to readers who would not otherwise have looked at him,[3] but had the usual effect of raising new doubt while gratifying the undoubting, as did the many other works of "Christian Evidences" then produced, before and after Paley.

It had been one of the regular exercises of piety to insist that Reason was a broken reed as beside Revelation; and the reflex device of making the broken reed function to support supernatural truth was for critical people as unprosperous as might have been expected by those who had noted the premiss. Through all the stress of repression, by the avowal of the defenders of the faith, "unbelief" was seen to extend. In 1800 Bishop Tomline deplores "the rapid growth of atheism and infidelity."[4]

[1] *History of the Jews*, App. to 2nd ed.

[2] This extended to Protestant Ireland. Lecky, *Hist. of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. 1892, iii, 382.

[3] Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, 1892, ii, 252–3.

[4] Rev. Dr. John Hunt, *Religious Thought in England in the Nineteenth Century*, 1896, p. 9.

This is false as to atheism, Paine being a devout deist; but it was true as to unbelief, his dialectic having a sledge-hammer force never compassed by the apologists. Even among the democrats, of course, he had the ear only of the thinkers, a category which did not include the robust Cobbett;[1] but these must have weighed then as in other periods.

7. Such a state of things, however, meant a heavy external poise of vehement opinion on the side of orthodoxy. In the previous century, despite the constant predominance of theology in the output of the press, English social life had worn a motley aspect in respect of the prevalence of deism among the educated. The natural indignation of Berkeley and Butler at the spectacle had been only forensically transmuted in Burke's later pretence of finding deism obsolete while Gibbon and Voltaire[2] were plainly in the ascendant. But at the turn of the century the wind had changed. The new literature was for the most part either pious or conformist; and Burke ranked as a seer.

Cowper, whose nervous and generally alert verse had embodied, before Wordsworth, the Wordsworthian principle of natural diction while it retained the long-predominant metre, had latterly become the accepted serious poet of the age, nonetheless because of a gift for acrid satire and a turn for the comic. That his piety was rooted in his neurosis was no drawback for an age in which hypochondria commonly so functioned, with Dr. Johnson as a chief exemplar. That he should be pedestalled as "The Poet of Christianity" for the next generation was no more than his religious desert; though the assignment left unsolved, for lovers of poetry, the dilemma, avowed by himself, as to the difficulty of finding for faith a clearly immortal music. Dying with the century, he, whose first volume had "fallen dead from the press" (1782),[3] figured for his native land as one of its chief poetic glories.

In the opening year of the new century his chief contemporary rival was Rogers, whose 'Pleasures of Memory' passed through fourteen editions in eleven years and served to stimulate Campbell to a similar success with the 'Pleasures of Hope,' another skilled exercise in the heroic couplet. In Rogers there is nothing of either religious or any other form of poetic passion; but nothing either of intellectual neology. He is the poet of gracefully correct feeling—which was no part of his character. From his attitude to freethought, accordingly, we may partly deduce that of a large body of society which was unruffled by religious

[1] Though Cobbett, after a period of hot hostility, became one of Paine's warmest political admirers.

[2] "E'en light Voltaire is *number'd* through the town."—Crabbe, *The Library* (1781). It is on record that Cowper in youth had translated two cantos of the *Henriade* for his brother, who did the rest. See Grimshawe's *Life*, ed. 1850, p. 7*b*. (Not mentioned by Stephen in *D. N. B.*)

[3] H. Crabb Robinson, *Diary*, ed. 1869, i, 381. This refers to the volume of 1782, not to the *Antithelyphthora*, which made a furtive appearance in the previous year.

zeal and shrugged its shoulders (as did even Cowper in a lucid interval[1]) at the perturbed devotions of Dr. Johnson.

> "Talking of Hume's and Gibbon's sceptical works," records Rogers's nephew, "he very much blamed their publishing them, and read a letter from Gray to his friend Mason, advising him not to visit Voltaire in his journey through Switzerland, as the men were not to be honoured who robbed mankind of their best consolation in life. 'If an archangel were to whisper in my ear,' said Mr. Rogers, 'that there was no future life, I would not reveal it.'"[2]

It is the note of the "right-thinking person," which was to dominate English literature till a new science should move more gifted poets to a sincerer reverie on ultimate problems.

8. Yet there were countering forces, even in the placid poetry of the time. Where Cowper, the neurotically pious layman, denounced geology as impious,[3] Crabbe, the defeated apprentice of medicine, become parish priest, proclaimed what was virtually an evolutionary view of nature and man, and scandalized some by picturing humanity as beginning in savagery, with no reference to Adam.[4] Without emulating Cowper's new freedom of natural diction, Crabbe had a humour of his own, and a gift of "sentence" equal to Cowper's. Where the other scowled at all science, Crabbe tranquilly welcomed its new progress;[5] and, humorously severe on the medical lore of his day, is more keenly so on the malice of pietism.

> The critical side of Crabbe has naturally had less notice than the presentment of rural life in which his power is most impressive. It has, however, its value as a social document:—
>
> Against her foes Religion well defends
> Her sacred truths, but often fears her friends.
> If learned, their pride, if weak, their zeal she dreads,
> And their hearts' weakness, who have soundest heads.
> But mostly fears the controversial pen,
> The holy strife of disputatious men.
>
> The earlier lines on sectarian strifes are no less pungent:—
>
> Dull though impatient, peevish though devout,
> With wit disgusting, and despised without;
> Saints in design, in execution men,
> Peace in their looks, and vengeance in their pen.....
> And each, like Jonah, is displeased if God
> Repent his anger, or withhold his rod.
>
> The sceptics are in comparison treated with a quite tepid censure:—

[1] Letter to Newton, Aug. 17, 1785.
[2] P. W. Clayden, *Rogers and his Contemporaries*, 1889, ii, 226.
[3] *The Task*, Bks. III and VI.
[4] *The Library*—the poem of which Burke secured the publication. (Not Johnson, as asserted by Prof. Henry Morley.)
[5] In the period of the reaction he produced an 'Essay on Botany,' but the Vice-Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, "protested against an English publication on such a subject, and it was therefore burnt" (Stephen in *D. N. B.*).

There sceptics rest, a still-increasing throng,
And stretch their widening wings, ten thousand strong;
Some in close fight their dubious claims maintain;
Some skirmish lightly, fly, and fight again;
Coldly profane, and impiously gay,
Their end the same, though various in their way.

In the later *Parish Register* the satire on new forms of clerical pietism is even more mordant than in *The Library*.

Cowper, in an exceptionally lucid interval, had privately written on the bigots in Crabbe's spirit: "No man was ever scolded out of his sins.....There is no grace that the spirit of self can counterfeit with more success than a religious zeal. A man thinks he is fighting for Christ, and he is fighting for his own notions." (Letter to Newton, June 17, 1783.) Cowper, of course, is often satirically severe on the "worldly" type of cleric.

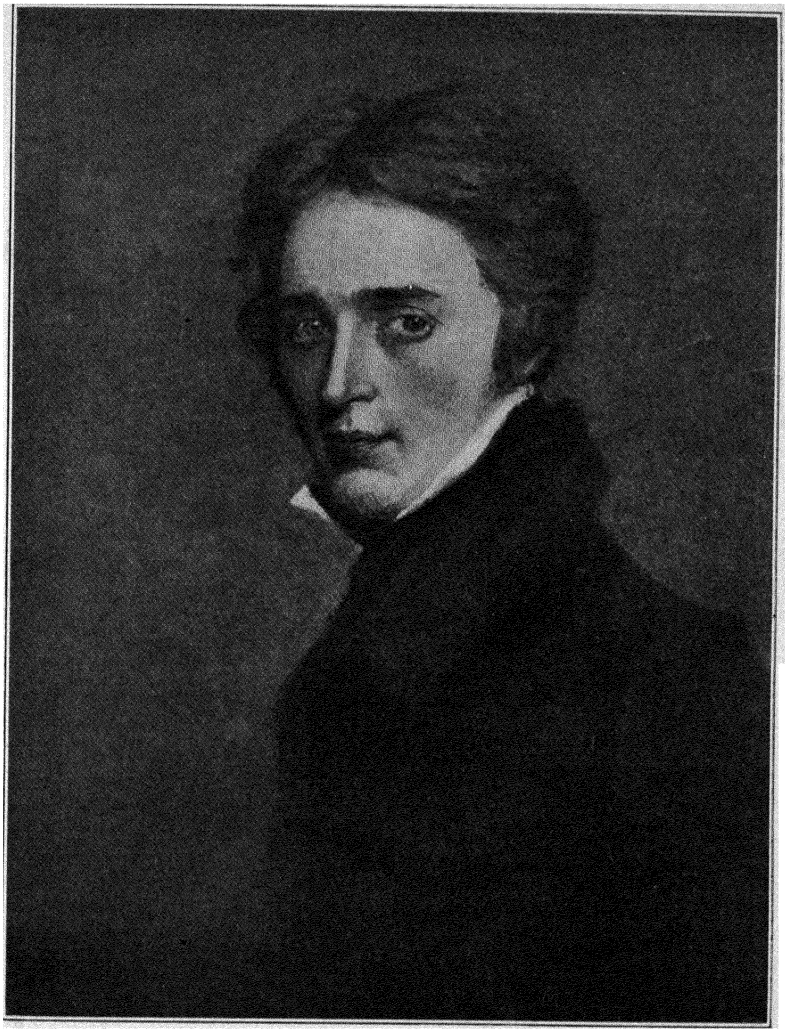
9. The religious revival, however, was sustained on non-contentious levels irrespective of the political reaction. Anna Letitia Aikin, who became Mrs. Barbauld and with her Presbyterian husband turned Unitarian, wrote acceptable devotional poetry (1773–75), so much more readable than her couplets, before Cowper did; and her 'Hymns in Prose for Children' (1781) had an almost classic status for nigh a century;[1] though her one admirable lyric stanza, 'Life, we have been long together,' has rather a latitudinarian than an evangelical flavour. It was characteristic of the temper of the reaction that when in 1811 her pacifism inspired her to a poem in which she used the figure of the New Zealander visiting the ruins of London she incurred such virulent censure that she thenceforth practically ceased to write. Macaulay, in the next decade and later, could use the illustration with impunity and éclat.[2]

An element of moral strength in the revival was the concern of the religious poets and others for such real reforms as the abolition of slavery and the education of the common people. Cowper had sounded the call against slavery as movingly as any; and though it was left to the deists of the French Revolution to issue the first decree of freedom, the pietists of England, led by Clarkson and Wilberforce, had a large share of the credit of the later abolition of slavery under the British flag. That the resistance was also in large part religious did not cancel the achievement.

10. On the other hand, the hideous crimes of the French Revolution tended greatly to discredit, in the English atmosphere, alike the new liberalism which had welcomed its beginnings and the freethinking associated with its promotion. What the Revolution began the policy of

[1] It is startling to learn from Lamb that Mrs. Barbauld was "a torment and curse to her husband." (Allsop, *Letters*, etc., *of Coleridge*, 3rd ed. p. 117.)

[2] The odd thing is that Mrs. Barbauld should have been execrated for using a literary figure that even then was familiar. It had been employed, with variations of name, by Horace Walpole and Volney, and by many other writers before them. The outcry seems to have been a matter of war psychology.



SHELLEY

This portrait was first published in an article by the owner, Mrs. N. P. Dunn, in the "Century Magazine" for October, 1905 giving account of the circumstances under which it was painted.

Napoleon completed. At the Peace of 1801 he had still many English admirers, some of whom publicly hailed him as "The Saviour of the World":[1] the renewal and the desperate protraction of the European struggle wrought for an inveterate hostility to all "French principles." Paine the deist incurred the gathering obloquy of Paine the republican; and to be an "infidel," with first Godwin and then Shelley figuring as preachers of revolution in ethics, politics, and religion, was to be shunned and defamed, and if possible ruined.

11. Looking back on the spirit of the century at its advent, we can say that the feet of the young men who were to carry it out were already at the door. A new poetry was already heralded and begun by Coleridge and Wordsworth; Byron was emerging; Keats and Shelley, Lamb and Hazlitt, were soon to begin the transformation that makes nineteenth-century English literature so vitally different from that of the eighteenth. But for all the purposes of average mental life the environment was still much more retrograde than progressive. The eighteenth century, latterly led by France, had been increasingly eager to study natural law; Cowper, as his reverend biographer[2] after him, protested against a meteorology which explained weather portents without recognizing the intervention of God;[3] and he who so many times attempted suicide, and passed so much of his life in black religious misery, proclaimed that suicide was a common result of unbelief.[4]

The pietistic temper began to invade even the saner minds. The young Hallam, consciously superior as an inductive historian to the Scottish Professor John Millar,[5] saw in Napoleon's disaster at Moscow a Special Providence.[6] The shadow of superstition was deepening anew, and the pious poetry of Cowper, feverishly affirming that plague and famine, earthquake and disaster, are punishments dealt out to man for his sins by God,[7] ministered acceptably to myriads of the devout. That he was all the while a hot patriotic militarist made his ascendancy the more complete.

Above all, the recrudescence of Evangelicalism meant a new dominion of fear as to future punishment. In 'The Pilgrim's Progress' we see how Protestant zeal had meant an intensification of that fear of a future hell which Christianity had evolved from the slighter superstitions of pagan antiquity; and which, with other spiritual terrors, Lucretius had declared to have been conquered for instructed men by Epicurus. Medieval

[1] H. Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, ed. 1869, i, 106.
[2] Grimshawe, ed. 1850, p. 134, *note*.
[3] *Table Talk; The Progress of Error; Expostulation*, etc.
[4] *Truth*, 1-vol. ed. of Works, 1850, p. 515*b*. After the suicides of the religious Romilly, Haydon, and Hugh Miller, the argument lost currency.
[5] As to whom see Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*, ed. 1872, pp. 10–11; and the *Autobiography of Dr. A. Carlyle*, ed. 1910, p. 516 sq.
[6] *Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818), 11th ed. i, 377.
[7] *The Task*, Bk. II.

Catholicism had exploited such fear, for economic ends, till it had become a part of the average temper. Protestantism, from Luther onwards, exploited it no less; and in evangelical England it now became as active, even among the educated, as it had been in Scotland in the previous age among the uneducated. Scholarly divines, and many other educated men, believed in the personality of Satan. The fear of dying "outside the true Church" haunted undergraduates and academics. In the first half of the century we shall find it actually determining, through a whole generation, the religious ideation of men of the calibre of the Newmans, Pattison, Conington, the Tractarians generally, and myriads of others who had received the ordinary religious training. Hell and the Devil became potent factors in average thought.

12. The effect of the atmosphere and the machinery of reaction is to be seen in the prevailing tone of serious literature for more than a generation, as well as, contingently, in the slowness to receive all newly inspired work in general. There was no welcoming public for Keats. Jane Austen's masterpieces had to wait many years to find publishers;[1] and George Eliot tells that it was long "before Charles Lamb's Essays were known familiarly to any but the select few" in the period of her youth.[2] Inane and impotent books[3] meanwhile found large sales; and Southey's egregious "epic" of Joan of Arc passed for a great performance.

Wordsworth, one of the enthusiasts of the first days of the Revolution, had become deeply infected by the intellectual torpor when he produced 'The Excursion' (1814)[4] and thenceforth, save in his recurrences of inspiration, infected others; finally winning his assured vogue as a new "Poet of Christianity" for readers who could not perceive his pantheism but could absorb the 'Ecclesiastical Sonnets.' In reality he had gone perilously far on the way to earning the title of the Poet of Prose. He had helped to set that key of more than Catholic self-sufficiency in which the normal Englishman declared, after Cowper, his possession of "a truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew," thus sanctifying his intellectual disqualifications for half a century.

It is to be remembered, however, that Wordsworth himself experienced, in the period of reaction, its deadening effect on all intel-

[1] It is memorable that Whately was her first adequately appreciative reviewer (1821).

[2] Cross's *Life*, 1-vol. ed. p. 233.

[3] Wrong-headed books for children were not the least perniciously abundant products of the evangelical age. See, in Mrs. Andrew Lang's *Men, Women, and Minxes* (1913, p. 123), "The Fairchild Family and their Creator," for an account of a lamentably long-popular book, written by a woman much superior in natural goodness of character to her unhappy performance.

[4] Lamb, reading it in a friendly spirit, asked: "Is the Poet of *The Excursion* a Christian? or is it the Pedlar and the Priest that are?" (Letter of Sept. 19, 1814). Wordsworth, who never went to church, had now declared himself ready to "shed his blood" for the Established Church. "All our [dissenting] ministers are so vile" (Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, i, 389).

lectual interests. Of *The Excursion* only five hundred copies were printed; the edition took six years to sell; and the next took seven. And this was not due merely to the inferior inspiration of so much of the poem. Of his pamphlet on *The Convention of Cintra* (1809), which contains some of his finest prose, "five hundred copies only were printed, and many of them went for waste paper" (*William Wordsworth*, by Elizabeth Wordsworth, 1891, pp. 118, 122). His fame and influence came to him in the period of revival, when he had grown more reactionary than ever!

13. War had been, as always, an arresting force; and we are to remember that the stress of that and the continuing fear of revolution coloured all thinking for a generation. As late as 1825 the London theatres were closed, and all dramatic exhibitions suspended, on the anniversary of the death of "King Charles the Martyr."[1] Innovation in religion was seen as congenital with innovation in politics, and faced in the same temper; and academic thinking was as far from the spirit of Newton as from the spirit of Gibbon. It has been observed that a work on 'The Dawn of the Nineteenth Century in England' exhibits no mental life on the higher planes at all; "the march of intellect" figuring only as a name for the introduction of machinery in manufactures. There was in fact very little sound thinking done throughout the war period; it is only after 1815 that it begins to re-emerge in philosophy, in economics (though Malthus's first 'Essay' had appeared in 1798), and in history.

Francis Horner (1778–1817), one of the best and sanest public men of his day,[2] who is notably secular in all his writing and quite uncommemorated for religion, was anxiously consulted in 1809 by the commentator Hewlett (who had been Horner's tutor) as to his risk in issuing a dissertation on 'Hebrew Numerals' which ventured to call in question some Pentateuchal statistics. From his own standpoint, which was largely scientific, Horner could not conceive that even "in the present times, so peculiarly unfavourable to all kinds of free inquiry," such a treatise could offend "the rational friends of the Church." The attempt to correct exaggerated figures is in his opinion "calculated, instead of offending the rational friends of Christianity, to remove one of the popular but slightest [*sic*] grounds of objection to the inspiration of the whole text of the Pentateuch."[3] But the "rational" wing of orthodoxy was small, and the 'Remarks' made no visible impression. G. S. Faber, who in 1801 had lectured on the authenticity of the Pentateuch, was in 1824 conscious only of the "difficulties of infidelity."[4]

14. It was a scandal to many that the first biographer of Cowper (1803) should have been his friend William Hayley, the avowed admirer

[1] *Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, 2nd ed. 1870, ii, 216.
[2] Compare the testimony of Coleridge, Allsop's *Letters*, etc., *of S. T. Coleridge*, 3rd ed. p. 70.
[3] *Memoirs of Francis Horner*, ed. 1849, pp. 214–15.
[4] Stoughton, as cited, i, 88–89.

of Gibbon; and though the now orthodox Southey testified that "everything is good about that man except his poetry," the *Quarterly* editor, the high-Tory Gifford, long delayed inserting an article on him by Southey because he, Gifford, "could not bear to see Hayley spoken of with decent respect."[1] Southey did not often so divagate. In the 'nineties the young Crabb Robinson had found "it soon became a reproach to be a follower of Godwin, on account of his supposed atheism," and was duly libelled by the Rev. Robert Hall on that score.[2]

It is on record, indeed, that the authorities thought it unnecessary to prosecute Godwin for his *Political Justice* (1793), seeing that the book, which brought its author a thousand pounds, cost three guineas. But had his friends Horne Tooke, Thelwall, and Hardy been convicted on their trial on an extravagant charge of high treason in 1794 Godwin would probably not have escaped. The book was republished in a cheaper edition in 1796; but the acquittal of his friends—of whom Tooke and Thelwall, as it happened, strongly disapproved of his work—probably swayed the authorities to inaction. The long-rooted laws and liberties of England still held good at some points of strain when in Scotland there were no safeguards for political offenders, who were savagely sentenced to transportation.

15. While political life in the North was thus terrorized, there was less of religious reaction because there had been less previous freethinking among the people. About 1775, as Burns tells,[3] "polemical divinity was putting the country half mad," the 'auld licht' of Calvinistic evangelicalism being assailed by the 'new licht' of semi-deistic 'moderatism,' by the championship of which Burns earned the status of a heretic. The old fanaticism, doubtless, had become partly atrophied, partly dead, among the more educated in the latter part of the century; and Moderatism in the Kirk stood on peaceable terms with deism as unaggressively represented by Adam Smith, and even by Hume during his lifetime. Those philosophers must have found some kindred spirits among the educated laity. Lord Cockburn, indeed, writing about 1830, when religion had become "fashionable," protests against what he admits to have been in his day a common charge, that Scotland, "but particularly Edinburgh," had about the beginning of the century been "very irreligious." The charge, he declares, is so far as he knows entirely false, adding: "I am not aware of a single professor to whom it was ever applied, or could be applied justly.[4].....I never knew, nor heard, of a single student, tutor, or professor by whom infidelity was *disclosed*." But he "doth protest too much." To say nothing of Professor John Millar in Glasgow (1735–1801),

[1] *D. N. B.*, art. Hayley.

[2] *Diary*, i, 31, 43–52. The atheism was real for a time; but Godwin later turned to theism under the influence of Coleridge.

[3] Autobiographical Letter to Dr. Moore, Aug. 2, 1787.

[4] Cockburn's *Memorials of His Time*, ed. 1872, pp. 37–8.

the writings of Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), so long a professor at Edinburgh and the intimate friend of Hume, are those of a deist,[1] though he seems to have had some belief in a future life.

The fact was that in the eighteenth century there had been much deism among educated men in Edinburgh as early as 1746;[2] and by one account this had been largely developed into atheism in 1776—certainly an exaggeration, but a challenge to any claim for untainted orthodoxy. In 1773 Dr. Blair's pulpit colleague bewailed "the multitude of professed infidels, who grasp at the character as a title of honour"; and in 1779 Henry Mackenzie[3] writes of women freethinkers as a new phenomenon. All this freethinking cannot have died out in a dozen years. What had happened in England after 1790 had happened in Scotland to a relatively larger extent. Freethinking which had formerly been avowed was thenceforth mostly concealed, the violent political reaction combining with the religious to intimidate the prudent. Nowhere was this social intimidation more complete than in the Scotland of 1800–60. Naturally students looking to their future, tutors looking to their livelihood, and professors looking to their peace and quietness, did not "disclose" their heretical opinions. The openness of speech of Millar of Glasgow, who was a strong Whig, and influenced many of his students in that direction, was exceptional in Scotland as elsewhere.

And if Cockburn found no heresy in later professors, the Kirk did. When in 1805 John Leslie, another friend of Hume's, was appointed to the Edinburgh chair of mathematics on John Playfair's removal to that of natural philosophy, the selection of Leslie was unitedly opposed by the Edinburgh ministers on the ground that he had quoted with high approval, in his researches on 'The Nature and Propagation of Heat' (1804), Hume on causation, calling Hume "the first, as far as I know, who has treated of causation in a truly philosophical manner."[4] The clergy accordingly "professed to see in him a champion of freethought"; though the General Assembly saw fit to drop the subject, the 'moderate' interest being there still predominant.

Leslie's heresy, however, went further. In the *Edinburgh Review* of January, 1814 (No. 46), appeared what was then reckoned a scandalous article, which "was universally attributed to Professor Leslie."[5] Review-

[1] It is told of him that, when an army chaplain, he took part in fighting, and when told that this was not within his commission his answer was "Damn my commission."

[2] Cp. W. L. Mathieson, *The Awakening of Scotland, 1747–97*, 1910, pp. 223, 241, and refs.; H. W. Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, 1912, p. 195, and refs.; P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, iii, 363, 373, and refs.

[3] In the Edinburgh *Mirror*, No. 30.

[4] W. L. Mathieson, *Church and Reform in Scotland*, 1916, p. 95.

[5] Dr. C. R. Edmonds, Introd. to rep. of Leland's *View of the Deistical Writers*, Tegg's ed. 1837, p. xxiii. Dr. W. Hanna, in his *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers* (1854, i, 284), says the paper in question was "understood to be from the able and influential pen of Professor Playfair." But this is not corroborated in *D. N. B.*, and is extremely unlikely.

ing the arguments of Laplace's essay *Sur les probabilités*, it substantially endorsed, with a formal saving clause about religion, the thesis of Hume that miracles cannot be proved by any testimony. This, for that day, was sheer "infidelity." It is not reasonably to be doubted that Leslie's views were shared by some of his colleagues. To say in the face of those incidents that by no professor or student was unbelief "disclosed" is to say nothing. To have been publicly more explicit than Leslie would have meant ostracism and prosecution. Freethinkers so placed had to hold their tongues, and Cockburn, reared in a bigoted High Tory household, was not likely to be the confidant of intellectually liberal men.

It is somewhat remarkable, indeed, that the *Edinburgh Review* in particular should have published such articles as Leslie's. The biographer of Chalmers writes[1] of "the painful impressions made by that religious scepticism which tinged so many of the papers in the earlier numbers." It had in fact the general reputation of being "esoterically quite indifferent to revealed religion," according to William Cory,[2] himself a freethinker.[3] The disrepute of the *Review* on this score was in fact diligently advertised on the Tory side by the new *Blackwood's Magazine*, which described the rival periodical as a "banquet of which scoffers and infidels are the principal purveyors."[4] To no one was this reputation more offensive than to one of the *Review's* most popular contributors, its first mover, Sydney Smith, wit, humorist, Whig, and clergyman.

At all times Smith seems to have felt himself surrounded by unbelief. In 1808 Haydon heard him preach: "he took his stand for Christianity on the conversion of Saint Paul. If his vision and conversion were the effects of a heated brain or fanaticism, it was the first time (he said) that madness gave a new direction to a man's feelings"[5]—a proposition possible only in the pulpit. In 1801 we find the defender of the faith in a preface, never reprinted, prescribing various measures of religious strategy in addition to "the just, necessary, and innumerable invectives which have been levelled against Rousseau, Voltaire, D'Alembert, and the whole pandemonium of those martyrs to atheism who toiled with such laborious malice, and suffered odium with such inflexible profligacy, for the wretchedness and despair of their fellow creatures."[6]

That this was not jesting may be gathered from his daughter's account of his indignation when a publisher sent him "a work of irreligious tendency," and when Jeffrey admitted "irreligious opinions" to the *Edin-*

[1] As cited, i, 284, *note*. Chalmers, as it happened, was a warm admirer of Jeffrey.
[2] *Guide to Modern English History*, 1882, Part II, p. 8.
[3] See A. C. Benson's Introduction to *Ionica*, end.
[4] Mathieson, *Church and Reform*, pp. 265–6.
[5] *Life of B. R. Haydon*, ed. by Tom Taylor, 1853, i, 102.
[6] *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, by his daughter, Lady Holland, ed. 1869, p. 49. Lady Holland remarks on the same page that her father's religion had in it "nothing intolerant."

burgh Review. To the former he writes that "every principle of suspicion and fear would be excited in me by a man who professed himself an infidel"; and to Jeffrey: "Do you mean to take care that the *Review* shall not profess infidel principles? Unless this is the case I must absolutely give up all connection with it."[1] And meanwhile Smith himself was so given to humorous blasphemy[2] that it was felt to be impossible in his case, as in that of Swift, to make him a bishop. As some critics have put it, "susceptibilities on the score of irreverence increase in proportion to the prevalence of doubt and scepticism."[3] Jeffrey, thus objurgated by his clerical humorist, was not a "practising" freethinker, but was clearly not evangelical. The son of a Scottish bigot, he had in his youth been prevented by his father from attending either the lectures of Millar at Glasgow or those of Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh, though he had for both the highest admiration;[4] and it may have been in reaction against such bigotry that he became latitudinarian.[5] Smith's letter, above cited,[6] declares that he has heard "with sorrow, from Elmsley, that a very anti-Christian article has crept into the last number of the *Edinburgh*"; and proceeds to say that Smith is sure the number cannot have been edited by Jeffrey; but the next letter suggests less certainty on that point. The incriminated article appears to have been a "review of Hoyle's Exodus," which is declared to have contained levities that are "ponderous and vulgar as well as indiscreet," and sure to "destroy *all* the good effect which the liberality and knowledge of the *Edinburgh Review* are calculated to produce," besides being particularly damaging to a clerical contributor. Jeffrey, on the other hand, seems to have genially charged Smith with "levity of quotations" in his own treatment of the Methodists, a kind of offence in which the Anglican humorist could see no harm. And of course no man scrupled to vilify "infidels"; it was only Christians whose feelings must be respected.

16. The fact that Smith's forecasts of ruin were not fulfilled, even after Leslie's article in 1814, points to the survival of a scattered body of enlightened opinion of an anti-clerical character throughout the country. The declaration against miracles by a man of science in an academic chair may be counted a turning point in serious thought; though five years later Whately (not yet an Archbishop) was supposed to achieve a triumphant defence of miracles against Hume by his ironical 'Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte' (1819). That this laborious

[1] *Memoir* cited, p. 142.

[2] For instance, his account of himself in the country: "At Coombe Ferry I am always in the condition of saying with Scripture, 'Go into the village over against you, and straightway you shall find an ass.'" Given in Appendix to T. Wemyss Reid's *Life of Lord Houghton*, ed. 1891, ii, 471, with other unclerical sayings of the Canon.

[3] Houghton, as cited by J. Wilson, *Studies in Modern Mind and Character*, 1881, p. 108.

[4] Cockburn, *Life of Jeffrey*, ed. 1872, pp. 10–11, 49.

[5] See his letter on religious instruction in schools, 1847, at end of Cockburn's *Life*.

[6] Dated October 30, 1808. *Letters*, in vol. with *Memoir*, p. 310.

jeu d'esprit should have passed for either successful ridicule or refutation of anything is significant of the then atrophied condition of the reasoning faculty at the universities and elsewhere.

To this day Whately's effort is a subject of illusion. He is commonly supposed to have turned a "myth theory" against itself by treating the history of Napoleon = Apollyon = Apollo, with his twelve marshals, his rise and fall and his occultation, as reducible to a sun-myth on mythological principles. Whately said nothing about the sun-myth, or any myth theory. That had been the theme of a French *brochure* by one Perez, published shortly before, which probably gave Whately his idea, since he makes some play with Napoleon's names. Perez seems to have handled *his* case with real cleverness. But Whately knew better than to advertise in England the *Origine de tous les Cultes* by which Dupuis, in the 'nineties, had initiated the myth theory of Christian origins. Whately's essay was directed against Hume's Essay of Miracles, which had remained a sufficiently active force even in the period of reaction, and against Laplace's essay on Probabilities, which had been the text of Leslie.

The gist of Whately's argument is the singularly weak proposition that the "wonderful achievements" of Napoleon were on Hume's principles as incredible as the Biblical tales which for Hume were miracles in the proper theological sense of elusions or infractions of natural law as known in human experience. The position was thought to be strengthened by the datum that concerning Napoleon's personal exploits and personal character there were conflicting testimonies—a proposition equally true in respect of every history. In sum, Whately never meets Hume's positions at all, save by isolating sentences which seem to claim more than Hume meant to claim; and offers no defence of what really pass for the miracles of Biblical history. Only the quasi-humorous form of the paper can save it from the charge of playing tricks with undefined terms. As it was it evoked from intelligent people the question whether the author thought Bible miracles were on the same mundane footing with Napoleon's victories. Like the argument of Perez, indeed, that of Whately invited a hypothesis of the historicity of Hercules.

There remains the historical fact that the non-evangelical Whately, who later produced a 'Logic' that was not bad, and a 'Rhetoric' that was better, and who justly ranked during his life as a man of high mental and practical ability, stood always as a convinced believer in Biblical as distinguished from pagan or post-apostolic miracles. It establishes the effect of the reaction upon intelligence, academic and other. Whatever the general British mind could achieve in that generation, it was inhibited from a rational handling of the subject of "revelation." Men and women in mass believed in every Biblical incredibility with all the certitude with which a Cromwellian Puritan knew himself to be in hourly communion with Omnipotence. For the majority, even of educated men, the conviction of "divine truth" was a closed compartment of the mind. It

was much that Whately set his face against persecution.[1] From the majority that was not to be looked for.

17. In Scotland, Thomas Chalmers, a man of large natural powers, by his article on "Christianity" in the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia* in 1813 incurred a theologian's charge of forming "an alliance with Atheism" by claiming to treat the credibility of the faith on strictly inductive lines, putting "internal evidence" aside as not a matter for reasoned judgment, and staking the case on "the historical and experimental [= experiential] evidence." Made prudent by his experience, Chalmers took in 1817 the much more popular course of publishing his eloquent 'Astronomical Discourses,' in which he undertook to rebut what his biographer calls "the argument, or rather prejudice, against the Christian Revelation which grounds itself on the infinity of the sidereal universe." Even that highly popular work was censured by the pious John Foster "for dragging into notice a stale and impotent objection against the truth of the Christian religion, and giving a wide spread by his discourses to an argument which, so far as we can find, is almost unknown."

As a matter of fact, it had been one of the most impressive arguments of Paine, who first pressed on the general reader a thought that has since counted for as much as any in the dissolution of the Christian creed. Chalmers's defence consisted in dwelling on the wondrous condescension of an Infinite Omnipotence which really did send down to a small planet its Son as a sacrifice. Such reasoning, eloquently inflated, was duly acclaimed and accepted. There is no reason to doubt Chalmers's orthodoxy; but it is not unplausible to surmise that the energy with which he threw himself later into social work and economic study was reinforced by a consciousness that theology was not the best of intellectual disciplines.

18. Renascence can be seen to take place in directions where religion was not in question. One of the first efficient stirrings was in the field of economics. A nation much troubled by its disorders of finance and currency had to find for these secular solutions; and the analytic brain of David Ricardo, stirred to literary production by James Mill, laid the foundations of a new science with a schematic power which Adam Smith had lacked. Malthus, who seems to have had no evangelical leanings,[2] but remained a theist even after realizing the non-benevolence of the "scheme of Nature" in respect of all procreation, set to his age a problem which was to be appreciated at least by all economists henceforth, and after a century promises to force upon human society a new recognition of law in things. On such promptings, men learned anew to think.

More immediately effective was the new intellectual discipline set up

[1] *Life*, by his daughter, ed. 1868, pp. 49, 89, 134, 371, 458.

[2] He privately avowed, concerning Unitarianism: "It is a system which every good mind must wish to be true, but I think there are considerable difficulties from some of the texts." This in 1828: *Correspondence of W. E. Channing and Lucy Aikin*, 1874, p. 17. The difficulties of Unitarianism have never been more blandly indicated.

by Jeremy Bentham, a fact zealously hidden from the youth of the next generation (1) by endless disparagement from Carlyle, who could see no literary virtue in anything but unction; and to some extent (2) even by temporary and unjust disparagement from John Stuart Mill in a period of psychological reaction, albeit he redeemed his lapse later by a worthy tribute to one who had done much to clarify his own thinking for him. Apart from the great direct amelioration wrought by Bentham in moving his age to a progressive reform of law and jurisprudence, his influence, with that of James Mill, his friend and disciple, was the most efficient impulse to new critical thought on social as distinguished from metaphysical and physical problems that can be recognized in the life of England up to the accession of Victoria. And he and James Mill were among the most thoroughgoing freethinkers of their age.

19. Physical science, which as such excludes all religious assumptions (though Joule is recorded to have been upheld in his search for the law of the conservation of energy by his theism), would have been a still greater factor in restoring the capacity for rational thought had it been as widely operative. But in pre-Victorian England science was represented to the general reader chiefly by perfunctory applications of it to the support of the Design Argument. Science, in fact, was still far from holding a strong position, though Playfair had popularized Hutton's rationalistic geology, and Leslie had succeeded Playfair in the Edinburgh Chair of Physics in 1819, and was knighted in 1832. Babbage in 1830 draws a sardonic picture of the straits of science, with especial regard to the Royal Society. That body, instituted at the Restoration, was hardly more efficient for science, as compared with similar bodies elsewhere, than it had been at its outset. With 685 members, of whom at least three were dukes and nine earls, with many other peers and baronets, an archbishop, and two bishops,[1] it did no progressive work; and the successive fissions of the Linnæan, the Geological, the Astronomical, and the Statistical Societies told of the impotence of the parent body.

Only in the next generation did Babbage's strictures[2] take effect; though his protest was influential in promoting the establishment of the British Association in 1831. He could quote Sir Humphry Davy as to slackness in chemistry; and a stronger pronouncement by Herschel on the general backwardness of British science. "Here," wrote the latter, "whole branches of continental discovery are unstudied, and indeed almost unknown, even by name. It is in vain to conceal the melancholy truth. We are fast dropping behind. In mathematics we have long since drawn the rein and given over a hopeless race. In chemistry the case is not much better."

This, of course, was largely applicable to the pre-Revolution period

[1] These numbers include only men who had been on the Council, or had read papers.
[2] *Reflections on the Decline of Science in England*, 1830.

exact science in England having been visibly arrested after the death of Newton. It was largely a matter of non-endowment on the one hand, and of the opening out of new careers for young men by imperial expansion. But the retardation became newly visible under the reaction in comparison with the continuous progress in France, where, as Playfair[1] noted, systematic endowment of mathematical science under the Academy had elicited a continuous activity, unapproached in England. It seemed as if a recollection of the popular vogue of the sciences in France in the half century before the Revolution had set up a fear that "that way Revolution lay."[2] Dalton (1766–1844) received in his lifetime little recognition for his great work, getting his pension only in 1833–36; and according to Babbage only men of private fortune could in general devote themselves to scientific research.

20. Nevertheless, there were stirrings of new life which Babbage and the other "physical" men had not heeded; and they reached even the Royal Society. Charles Darwin notes[3] as the first mooting of the principle of "natural selection" a paper read by Dr. W. C. Wells in 1813 before the Royal Society, and published in 1818 with his then much more noted 'Two Essays upon Dew and Single Vision.' But Wells's theorem as to natural selection of pigmented skins in certain climates appears, in fact, to have made no such impression as the more general doctrines of Lamarck were creating on the Continent, whatever it may have done to prepare English naturalists. The educational activity which produced the 'Library of Useful Knowledge' and the 'Cabinet Cyclopædia' in the early thirties was restricted to the mathematical sciences. The habit of thinking in terms of Genesis as to all problems of origins had been newly reinforced; and while Germans and Frenchmen were working freely towards a science of the forms of life, it was left in England to freelances of the next generation to prepare an audience for the decisive work of Charles Darwin.

Thus the impulse given by Erasmus Darwin to new English thought on cosmic problems by his *Zoonomia* (1794–96) and his 'Loves of the Plants' (4th ed. 1799) came to nothing in the age of reaction. His rhetorical poetry had ecstatic admirers; but that was killed for posterity by the burlesque 'Loves of the Triangles' in the *Anti-Jacobin*; and his many original ideas in physiology and biology were valued only when his great repute was past. Formally an optimistic theist, he posited naturalistic theories of the cosmos, alien to religious belief, and definitely extended to the animal world the Linnæus hypothesis of the evolution of

[1] *Diss. on the Progress of the Math. and Physical Sciences*, 1824.

[2] Brougham, delivering his Rectorial address at Glasgow in 1825, felt it worth while to protest (p. 47) that "Real knowledge never promoted either turbulence or unbelief."

[3] *Historical Sketch* prefixed to *The Origin of Species*, 6th ed. i, pp. xv–xvi; *Life and Letters*, iii.

many species "from a mixture of a few natural orders."[1] For such doctrine there was to be no audience in pre-Victorian England.

21. A very practical test of the temper of the time as to new scientific thought was furnished by the experience of Sir Thomas Charles Morgan (1783–1843), M.D. and F.R.C.P., and husband of the brilliant novelist, Lady Morgan (who in 1837 received the first civil list pension given to a woman).[2] In 1818 he published his 'Sketches of the Philosophy of Life,' which was violently and arrogantly assailed in 'Remarks on Scepticism' (1819) by the Rev. Thomas Rennell, who in 1816 had been elected Christian Advocate of Cambridge. As was the wont of Christian advocacy in that age, the attack relied on invective for religious support.[3] In his 'Sketches of the Philosophy of Morals' (1822) Morgan replies effectively enough to his pious assailant; but whereas the attack ran into six editions, Morgan's reply was ignored, and "fell almost stillborn from the press."[4] The fact that it was dedicated to Destutt de Tracy would suffice to get it banned. But the ostracism did not end there. The vilification of Morgan's so-called "materialism" (which had in point of fact been critically guarded) had such an effect that his professional reputation was seriously damaged, and he had to retire from practice.

22. And still, in the full tide of orthodoxy, chagrined avowals of the frequency of unbelief are always coming up. In the preface to a novel of 1825, *Tremaine, or the Man of Refinement*, it is complained that

> With the spread of luxury, there is a spread of infidelity. I say luxury, because God forbid it should arise from instruction. The efforts indeed of infidelity have been well met by the exertions of our best and highest rank of instructors.....Yet scepticism has again laid hold of us; and if there are more saints among us than formerly, there are also more infidels.[5]

The author, accordingly, makes his hero undergo a period of scepticism, from which he is at the proper time extricated by his prospective father-in-law, by the simple exposition of the fact that Boyle, Locke, and Newton were sound on the fundamentals, whatever may have been the case with later men of science and philosophers.

In the one nearly consummate novelist of the age, an artist incapable of such machinery, there is a startling illustration, nevertheless, of the benumbing force of the reigning orthodoxy. It is in Jane Austen's posthumous novel *Persuasion* (1818, finished in 1816) that the faults of character of an attractive but unsatisfactory suitor are accounted for in the light of the discovery that in his youth "there had been bad habits; that Sunday travelling had been a common thing"; and, further, "that

[1] *Zoonomia*, i, 502.

[2] In *D. N. B.* Lady Morgan, now unread, gets a notice of four columns; her husband, on the other hand, meets a markedly partisan hostile treatment, wholly inappropriate to the case, and impercipient of the problem.

[3] Which continues to be given in *D. N. B.*, art. *Rennell.*

[4] It was nevertheless reprinted in 1861 and later.

[5] Work cited, i, p. vi.

there had been a period of his life (and probably not a short one) when he had been, at least, careless on all serious matters."[1] Seeing that in *Northanger Abbey*[2] (ch. 29) Catherine Morland actually travels home on Sunday without any suggestion of moral peril, it would appear that in the last novel of all, written in sinking health, the keen sense of humour which marks Miss Austen off from all her corrivals, and is revealed in the first sallies of her girlhood, had partly capitulated to the contagion of the pietism of the time.

Chapter xvii of *Persuasion* at several points suggests an access of "serious" thought, in a state of enfeebled power. Mrs. Smith's unfailing cheerfulness is spoken of as a gift "from nature alone"—with the corollary that it is "the choicest gift of Heaven.....a merciful appointment" apparently "designed to counterbalance almost every other want." But Mrs. Smith in turn observes that "'There is so little real friendship in the world!—and unfortunately,' speaking low and tremulously, 'there are so many who forget to think seriously till it is almost too late.'" The deliverance on Sunday travelling belongs to this access of feeling; and in chapter xi also Anne had "to struggle against a great tendency to lowness," proceeding at the end to lecture the melancholy Captain Benwick on the need to "rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts, and the strongest examples of moral and religious endurance." Yet in chapter xii, in the account of the crowd collected "to enjoy the sight of a dead young lady, nay, two dead young ladies," we have the old humour at its freest.

[1] *Persuasion*, ch. xvii, near end.
[2] Also published in 1818, but written fifteen years before.

Chapter II

RELIGIOUS REACTION ON THE CONTINENT

§ 1. *Italy and Spain: Political Reaction: Underground Freethought*

1. None of the other Northern States was so markedly affected by reaction as Great Britain; but in those States too there were movements of religious revival; and in the South the political process was violent. In Italy it began in Tuscany almost at once. The rule of Napoleon, it is true, secured complete freedom of the press as regarded translation of free-thinking books, an entire liberty of conscience in religious matters, and a sharp repression of clericalism, the latter policy going to the length of expelling all the religious orders and confiscating their property.[1] All this counted for stimulus;[2] but the Napoleonic rule meantime choked one of the springs of vital thought—to wit, the spirit of political liberty; and in 1814–15 the clerical system returned in great force, as it did all over Italy, though the secularization of convent lands was not undone.[3] Everywhere freethought was banned. All criticism of Catholicism was a penal offence; and in the kingdom of Naples alone, in 1825, there were 27,612 priests, 8,455 monks, 8,185 nuns, 20 archbishops, and 73 bishops, though in 1807 the French influence had caused the dissolution of some 250 convents.[4] At Florence the Censure forbade, in 1817, the issue of a new edition of the translated work of Cabanis on *Les Rapports du physique et du moral;* and Mascagni, the physiologist, was invited to delete from his work a definition of man in which no notice was taken of the soul.[5] It was even proclaimed that the works of Voltaire and Rousseau were not to be read in the public libraries without ecclesiastical permission; but this veto was not seriously treated.[6] All native energy, however, was either cowed or cajoled into passivity.

What subsisted, in the nature of freethought, was the passive unbelief that had always been generated among active minds in Italy by the spectacle of the Papacy. This had been nourished in the previous generation by the French influence, which had been so potent on the philosophic

[1] Julien Luchaire, *Essai sur l'évolution intellectuelle de l'Italie*, 1906, pp. 4–7; Spalding, *Italy*, 3rd ed. 1845, iii, 79, 89; Laing, *Notes of a Traveller*, 2nd ed. 1842, pp. 434–5.

[2] As to Napoleon's service in developing Italy, see Spalding, iii, 71–2.

[3] Seignobos, *Hist. polit. de l'Europe Contemporaine*, 1897, pp. 308–9.

[4] Dr. Ramage, *Nooks and Byeways of Italy*, 1868, pp. 76, 105–13. Ramage describes the helplessness of the better minds before 1830. [5] Luchaire, pp. 35, 36. [6] *Id.* p. 30.

side that the system of Condillac became the dominant one in Italy; and that rationalistic tendency has never since been overpowered in the Italian sphere. But for Niebuhr, living at Rome in the period of reaction, Italian freethought stood for the sheer repulsion set up by Papal rule, and in particular by the shameless traffic in indulgences, which had become transferable articles of merchandise. "It is these things," he pronounced, "which make so many Italians atheists. They cannot swallow this, and therefore throw away everything else with it."[1] And such forces remained at work, to operate actively one day in the "resurrection" of Italian independence.

2. In Spain there was a similar balance between greatly preponderating ecclesiastical influence and persistent unbelief among a minority. Under Charles IV the country had become so thoroughly re-clericalized at the very outbreak of the Revolution that no more leeway seemed possible; but even in Spain, early in the nineteenth century, the government found means to retrogress yet further, and the minister Caballero sent an order to the universities forbidding the study of moral philosophy. The King, he justly declared, did not want philosophers, but good and obedient subjects.[2] Nonetheless we find the Spanish Inquisitor-General in 1815 declaring that "all the world sees with horror the rapid progress of unbelief," and denouncing "the errors and the new and dangerous doctrines" which have passed from other countries to Spain.[3] In 1817, accordingly, the old Spanish Inquisition was actually re-established.

That ill-famed institution, indeed, was in no respect restored to its former power: "it was harmless, but its very name was still capable of rousing the fiercest passions";[4] and in 1820 the rebellious Liberals of Madrid broke into prisons "in order to set free the martyrs for religious liberty whom they supposed to be there." The only prisoner, however, was a crazy French priest "whose extravagant royalism had culminated in mysticism. He was comfortably lodged in an attic."[5] But if the Inquisition was impotent, the throne could chronically fill its prisons with liberals; and upon all overt intellectual life the Church had the deadly power conferred on it by the haphazard Cortes of 1810. When it was proposed by the liberals in that body to abolish the censorship of the press the panic-stricken orthodox denounced the idea as opening "the floodgates of atheism and anarchy.....Finally secular books were set free, but the Cortes decided by seventy votes against thirty that books on religious subjects must receive the *imprimatur* of a bishop before publication."[6]

Under that ban the press of Spain was to remain for the best part

[1] Lieber, *Reminiscences of Niebuhr*, Philadelphia, 1835, p. 131. Cp. 102. Compare also Achilli, as cited by Pearson, *On Infidelity*, 1853, p. 408.
[2] Doblado (Blanco White), *Letters from Spain*, 1822, p. 358.
[3] Llorente, *Hist. critique de l'Inquisition en Espagne*, 2e édit. iv, 153.
[4] H. B. Clarke, *Modern Spain*, 1906, p. 34. [5] *Id.* p. 47. [6] *Id.* p. 21.

of the century. Save therefore for anti-clerical journalism and books printed beyond the frontiers, freethinking discussion in Spain was maintained only in the clubs of the Freemasons, who were always anti-clerical and more or less anti-monarchical, and always liable to be betrayed by bribed traitors. It is told of one imprisoned Freemason that, under pretext of revealing a plot, he was admitted to the presence of King Ferdinand, only to deliver an impeachment of the King's oppression of Spain, "a glowing eulogy of the virtues and powers of the brotherhood, and an exhortation to Ferdinand to join it. He was handed over to the Inquisition."[1] While Spain remained the least educated country in Western Europe the state of things was only transiently alterable by revolutions and reactions. A mainly illiterate people remained formally religious and politically fanatical for the Church, while the educated minority in the cities could make no printed appeal. Literary discussion of religion being impossible, freethought had to live underground, indestructible but inexpansive, contributing nothing to the movement of thought outside.

§ 2. *France: Reaction and Recovery*

1. In France, on the other hand, in the teeth of the still powerful spirit of freethought, there arose, with no help from Napoleon save that given by his policy of coercive conciliation of the Church, a religious reaction which may in large part be termed sentimental rather than intellectual, taking as it did an æsthetic rather than a critical form. The whole literature of Europe, in the generation after the French Revolution, reveals directly or indirectly the transmutation that the eighteenth century had worked in religious thought. Either it reacts against or it develops the rationalistic movement. In France the literary reaction is one of the first factors in the orthodox revival. Its leader and type was the anti-Napoleonic Vicomte de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), in whose typical work, the *Génie du Christianisme* (1802), lies the proof that, whatever might be the "shallowness" of Voltairism, it was profundity beside the philosophy of the majority who repelled it. Whereas the militant freethinkers of the eighteenth century, besides assailing the creed of Christianity as historically incredible and morally indefensible, had claimed to show that the institution had been a perpetual hindrance to civilization, Chateaubriand undertook to demonstrate that it had been the main promoter of civilization—in art, letters, morals, government, and science.

There was enough ground for the defence to have sustained a case for the socio-political efficacy of the Church in the Dark Ages, when monks were agriculturists, producers, and traders; though the historic statement would have revealed them simply as shrewd wealth-seeking corporations, and the Papacy as a power-seeking State within the State. But when Chateaubriand claimed that the Church had been the cherisher and

[1] *Id.* p. 40.

sustainer—in virtue of the work of men of science within its pale—of that spirit of science which the Church had notoriously sought officially to strangle, the limit of his critical usefulness was reached. Of science in general he was profoundly ignorant; and of the Middle Ages his knowledge was of that imaginative order which inspired the romantic movement in general. On one who now reads it with any scientific preparation, the book makes an impression in parts of a consummate fatuity. The handling of the scientific question at the threshold of the inquiry is that of a man incapable of a scientific idea. All the accumulating evidence of geology and palæontology is disposed of by the grotesque theorem that God made the world out of nothing with all the marks of antiquity upon it—the oaks at the start bearing "last year's nests"—on the ground that, "if the world were not at once young and old, the great, the serious, the moral would disappear from nature, for these sentiments by their essence attach to antique things."[1] In the same fashion the fable of the serpent is with perfect gravity homologated as a literal truth, on the strength of an anecdote about the charming of a rattlesnake with music.[2] In the face of such exegesis some Churchmen were glad to be able to point out that Chateaubriand was himself heretical; while the more masculine minds on his side, like De Bonald and Lamennais, saw in him only a showy auxiliary.[3]

It is humiliating, but instructive, to realize that a little over a century ago a "Christian reaction," in a civilized country, was inspired by such an order of ideas; and that in the nation of Laplace, with his theory in view, it was the fashion thus to perorate in the taste of the Dark Ages.[4] The book is merely the eloquent expression of a nervous recoil from everything savouring of cool reason and clear thought, a recoil partly initiated by the sheer excitement of the near past; partly fostered by the vague belief that freethinking in religion had caused the Revolution; partly enhanced by the tendency of every warlike period to develop emotional rather than reflective life. What was really masterly in Chateaubriand was the style; and sentimental pietism had now the prestige of fine writing, so long the specialty of the other side. Yet a generation of monarchism served to wear out the ill-based credit of the literary reaction; and *belles lettres* began to be rationalistic as soon as politics became again radical. Already in 1843 L. F. Alfred Maury (1817–1892) had published his *Essai sur les légendes pieuses du moyen age*, which was the beginning of the end of medievalism. Thus the prestige of the neo-Christian school was already spent before the revolution of 1848;[5] and the inordinate vanity of Chateaubriand, who died in that year, had undone

[1] Ptie. i, liv. i, ch. v. [2] *Id.* i, liv. iii, ch. ii.

[3] Ch. Adam, *La Philosophie en France*, 1894, pp. 33–4.

[4] It is further to be remembered, however, that Mr. Matthew Arnold saw fit to defend Chateaubriand, calling him "great," when his fame was being undone by common sense.

[5] C. Wordsworth, *Diary in France*, 1845, pp. 55–6, 124, 204.

his special influence still earlier. He had created merely a literary mode and sentiment.

2. Such sentiment is of course a social factor, like another, and Chateaubriand may be held to have been influential beneath all the manifestations of general religious opinion which colour French literature down to 1870. He is visibly influential with Madame de Staël, whose vaguely eloquent defence of religion in her *De l'Allemagne* (1810) affected French opinion all the more because the book was censored by Napoleon's police. Her somewhat hesitant approval of Count Stolberg's faith in sacrifice, which connected the slaying of Abel symbolically with the crucifixion of Jesus,[1] exhibits one of the tendencies seen at work in our own day. Such quasi-mystical doctrine,[2] current in some quarters, may explain the declaration, cited by the German F. von Raumer from a Frenchman in 1841, that "Atheism and Free-thinking are quite out of fashion, and the French are upon the whole as religious as other people."[3] But the same observer cites from another Frenchman, at the same moment, the testimony that "it is an error to suppose that the mass of people in France is religious, or feels any want of religion. It is only in parts of the south, and in Bretagne, that such a feeling may exist."[4] And, as we have just noted, Canon Wordsworth in the middle forties found intellectual France distressingly anti-religious.

3. A social and political reaction in favour of religion had been part of the Restoration, on the fall of Napoleon. The Jesuit Order, dissolved in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV, had been secretly re-established by Pius VII in 1800; and in 1815 this force was promptly available for clerical purposes in France. The members of the other abolished religious orders returned in swarms; and a Catholic "terror" was sought to be imposed throughout the land, with the re-establishment of the compulsory Sunday, the confessional, the abolition of divorce, and the refusal of death-bed absolution to holders of confiscated Church property. The assassination of the Duc de Berry, in 1820, naturally set up a violent reaction against "liberalism" of all kinds; and the young Victor Cousin was deprived of his chair, Guizot being dispossessed two years later. A law punishing with death all forms of sacrilege was passed, but was never enforced; and every step of coercion began to evoke a resisting propaganda.

Paul-Louis Courier (1772–1825), the most brilliant of pamphleteers, satirized the domineering clerics; and Béranger (1780–1857), the people's poet, sang them out of countenance. His prosecutions and imprisonments, in 1821 and 1825, only strengthened his hold. Never a propagandist of rationalism, he was the more potent as an anti-clericalist;

[1] Work cited, ed. 1841, p. 565.

[2] Mme. de Staël expressly argues that "our sentiments" are as authoritative as our reason.

[3] *England in 1841*, Eng. trans. 1842, ii, 205.

[4] *Id.* p. 202. Compare M. Aulard's recent book, *Le Christianisme et la révolution française*—a notably ripe and weighty study.

even as Courier, assassinated, was more influential dead than living. The clerical reaction, of which Louis XVIII saw the danger, and to which he opposed prudent evasions, did but generate a new anti-clericalism, which at length exploded under Charles X in the Revolution of 1830.

4. The more intellectual reactionism of Comte Joseph de Maistre (1754–1821) came into play only after that of Chateaubriand was already on the wane; and it had no great popular influence. The posthumous volume, *Soirées de St. Pétersbourg* (1821), contains some powerful and some perverse criticism of the polemic of the French freethinkers of the eighteenth century; but already the freethinking spirit was taking new lines; and de Maistre's writings, of which the treatise *Du Pape* (1819) made the widest impression, constituted rather a propaganda of authoritarianism against the spirit of revolution than a support to religious thought as such, though he stood fast for religion, even to the last ditch of original sin. It was in the field of theistic philosophy and in the official re-organization of orthodox doctrine that religious reaction exhibited itself after the Restoration. And while those activities counted for much in giving society an orthodox aspect and atmosphere, they wrought no such revival of the religious temper as had been seen in England.

There was abundant aspersion of Voltaire; but Voltaire had always been a theist; and the new official philosophy was theistic rather than Christian. At the Revolution the reigning philosophy was that of Condillac, which traced all ideation to sensation; and since this theorem, though scientific in form and spirit, was never adequately developed, it began to undergo disintegration even at the hands of those who had been trained in it; with the result that after the Restoration the dominant or official philosophic doctrine could no longer be termed materialistic. Still it was only philosophically, not evangelically, religious; and the series or group of French professors then becoming prominent—Maine de Biran, La Romiguière, De Gerando, and Royer-Collard, whose influence may be said to have culminated in the "eclectic" system of Victor Cousin (1792–1867)—effected only a fashion of theistic metaphysic, *plus* an official religiosity.

5. A more powerful and practical influence was for a time wielded by the celebrated Abbé de Lamennais (1782–1854), one of the three eminent Bretons who in the nineteenth century illustrated the potency of sheer gift of style in French life, the others being Chateaubriand and Renan. Of the three, Lamennais had the largest volume of native religious impulse. His *Reflexions sur l'état de l'Eglise* (1808) was suppressed by the imperial censorship; but in 1817 he was free to issue the first volume of his famous *Essai sur l'Indifférence en matière de Religion*, which for a time wrought on a wide scale the kind of intellectual hypnotism achieved in a smaller area by the authoritarianism of de Maistre and of De Bonald.

The last-named (1753–1840), an emigré of the Revolution, styled by

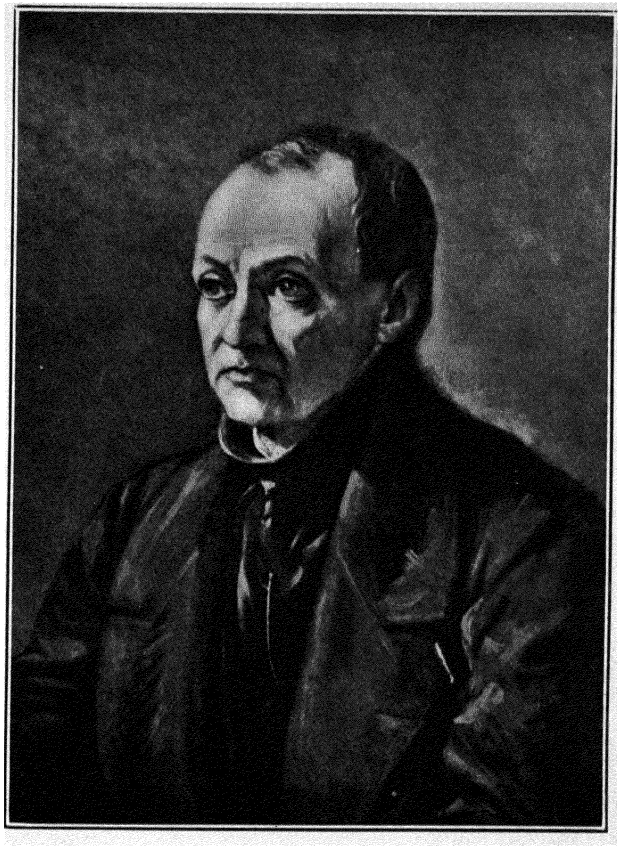
Madame de Staël "the philosopher of anti-philosophy," was made a peer at the Restoration, and had wrought strenuously for the principle of authority so early as 1796, when his *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux*, in three volumes, was suppressed by the Directory. Treatises in the same spirit were produced by him in 1800, 1801, and 1802. Returning to France, he at length adjusted himself to the Napoleonic régime, becoming a councillor of the Imperial University; but at the Restoration he found himself in his fit environment, and in 1818 added *Recherches philosophiques sur les premiers objets des connaissances morales* to his battery against all things revolutionary and innovative. As a system, it was rigorously à priori, dogmatic, authoritarian, starting from the premiss of a primary language given to men by God in the Garden of Eden, and a divine instruction culminating in the Bible—a new version of Bossuet, as De Maistre's *Du Pape* was in its way a new version of Hobbes.

6. It is not to be supposed that such dogmatism, however eloquently worded, had much effect on the mentality of the Frenchmen who had been freethinkers. Neither did it influence men like Maine de Biran, moving towards a religion of feeling. What happened after the Restoration was a marshalling of all the ecclesiastical forces, to which rallied a large body of place-hunters untroubled by opinions,[1] the whole ably swayed, for a short time, by the returned Jesuits. The motive and inspiration common to all the doctrinary leaders alike was the sincere craving for a stable principle of order as against the hazards of political revolution; all conceiving the desired principle as philosophico-religious[2] rather than formally political, but all envisaging a political or social end. They can be seen reacting to the experience of the Revolution and the Empire as the sceptical Hobbes had reacted to the experience of English fanaticism and the English Civil War; as Montaigne had reacted to that of the ruinous Wars of Religion of his age; as Bossuet had reacted to the spectacle of the endless strifes of Protestantism. We can the more readily appreciate it by recalling the mood and the polemic of Burke against all political reconstruction. And we shall find the same external motive inspiring the reconstructive attempts of such non-Christian systematists as Saint-Simon, Comte, and Fourier.

It follows that the general activity, whether liberal or illiberal, was either hostile or unhelpful to the sheer truth-seeking which is the conceptual ideal of freethought, save insofar as—and it was not very far—the official French philosophers worked critically over the ground of Condillac and Kant. Only in the physical sciences, at that stage; in the strictly sociological and historical work of the young Guizot and some

[1] Cp. Damiron, *Essai sur l'hist. de la philos. en France au xix^e^ siècle*, 3e ed. 1834, i, 31.

[2] De Bonald in 1830 stated that, while Lamennais and de Maistre stood for the same principles, Lamennais applied them to philosophy, de Maistre to religion, and he, Bonald, only to politics (Adam, *La Philos. en France*, p. 35). But Bonald is as religious as the others in his premisses.



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others ; in economics ; and in the new studies of the skilled philologists, was the general mind at all attuned to the temper of disinterested curiosity which had so signally marked Diderot, and in a large degree Voltaire. On all matters of general moral doctrine, of the philosophy of the State, and of the philosophy of the cosmos, the overplus of writing was authoritarian. It had, too, the advantage of literary power. De Bonald, de Maistre, Chateaubriand, and Lamennais were all brilliant and forceful writers ; and the prestige of eloquent and pungent style counted nowhere more for influence than in France.

7. And still the religious reaction, like the political, was to prove but temporary and transient. Between Victor Cousin and the other "classic philosophers" of the first half of the century a species of orthodoxy was nominally reinstated. Yet even among these there was no firm coherence. Maine de Biran, one of the gentle and shrinking spirits who passed gradually into a state of emotional pietism from fear of the perpetual pressures of reason,[1] gravely declared (1821) that a philosophy which ascribed to deity only infinite thought or supreme intelligence, eliminating volition and love, was pure atheism ;[2] and this pronouncement struck at the largely pantheistic philosophy of Cousin. Nor was this species of orthodoxy any more successful than the anti-rationalism of Joseph de Maistre and de Bonald in setting up a philosophic form of faith, as distinct from the cult of rhetoric and sentiment founded by Chateaubriand. Cousin, always a mixture of liberal and conservative, was deeply, if not always justly, distrusted by those who knew him, and at the height of his popularity he was contemned by the more sincere minds around him, such as Sainte-Beuve, Comte, and Edgar Quinet.[3] The last thinker himself counted for a measure of rationalism, though he argued for theism, and undertook to make good not only the historicity of Jesus against those who challenged it, but the bulk of the gospel story as against Strauss.

For the rest, even among the ostensibly conservative and official philosophers, Théodore Jouffroy, an eclectic, who held the chair of moral philosophy in the Faculté des Lettres at Paris, was at heart an unbeliever from his youth up,[4] and even in his guarded writings was far from satisfying the orthodox. "God," he wrote,[5] "interposes as little in the regular development of humanity as in the course of the solar system." He added a fatalistic theorem of divine predetermination, which he verbally salved in the usual way by saying that predetermination pre-

[1] Cp. Ernest Naville, *Maine de Biran*, 1874, pp. 65–105. [2] *Id.* p. 79.

[3] Cp. Paul Deschanel, *Figures Littéraires*, 1889, pp. 130–32, 171–73 ; Lévy-Bruhl, *The Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Eng. tr. 1903, p. 190 ; Ch. Adam, *La Philosophie en France*, 1894, p. 228 ; and Jules Simon, *Victor Cousin*, 1887, *passim.*

[4] Adam, as cited, pp. 227–30.

[5] In his *Mélanges philosophiques* (1833), Eng. trans. (incomplete) by George Ripley, *Philos. Essays of Th. Jouffroy*, Edinburgh, 1839, ii, 32. Ripley, who was one of the American transcendentalist group and a member of the Brook Farm Colony, indicates his own semi-rationalism in his Introductory Note, p. xxv.

supposed individual liberty. Eclecticism thus fell, as usual, between two stools; but it was not orthodoxy that would gain. On another line Jouffroy openly bantered the authoritarians on their appeal to a popular judgment which they declared to be incapable of pronouncing on religious questions.[1]

8. As against such criticism no help was given to pietism by the bulky treatise of Benjamin Constant,[2] the lover of Madame de Staël, 'On Religion, considered in its source, its forms, and its developments' (5 vols. 1824–34). An exceptionally cosmopolitan culture, ranging from Swiss schooling to English and German studies, gave Constant a wide acquaintance with the thought-movements of his time; but he had not the fit cast of mind for scientific work. It is disappointing, but perhaps it ought not to be surprising, to find the interesting author of *Adolphe* an incoherent doctrinaire who applies to a sociological and philosophical problem the methods of the political liberal in an age and country in which liberalism was an earnest theoretic code for ill-comprehended and unmanageable political forces. Constant and Royer-Collard, in France, alike exemplified the fatality of the situation.

A sceptic in his youth, Constant had come under the influence of the Schleiermacher movement in Germany, and became eager to proclaim that religion is a universal and beneficent reaching of the human spirit to the power behind Nature, and that this spontaneous urge is essentially distinct from the spirit of dogmatic construction. Why, in Christianity, it had become wholly dogmatized he does not explain, beyond showing that priesthoods spontaneously seek power. His tumultuous convictions moved him to declare alternately that the spirit of religion is universal, and that "no irreligious people ever remained free."[3] Of an irreligious people, in the terms of his case, he can give no instance; and his instances of peoples shedding obsolete and embracing new religions stultify his thesis. The motive of the treatise would seem to have been a concern for a religious "truce of God" in terms of his own sentiment, which left him incapable of understanding Hume or profiting by Gibbon, and capable of denouncing Paine,[4] the most ardent of deists, the author of the phrase "the Religion of Humanity," as seeing in "religion" the enemy of liberty. With the malice of the sentimentalist Constant describes Paine's style[5] as "trivial and often gross." His own style is so vainly turgid and so tediously voluble that his treatise has been left unstudied, as it was in its own day, the book thus constituting one of the acts in his life-tragedy of failure. Information and suggestion it has for the student, and it broadly applies an evolutionary conception to the phenomena of religion

[1] *Mélanges philosophiques*, trans. as cited, ii, 95.
[2] Henri Benjamin Constant de Rebecque, 1767–1830.
[3] *De la religion*, 1824, liv. i, ch. iv, 66.
[4] Whose name he spells "Payne," and whose book he clearly had not read.
[5] *Id.* p. 91.

at every stage ; but all this left it wholly unserviceable to the religious reaction. A picture of religion as a primary emotional state which lends itself to all forms of myth, and is capable of exploitation in all forms of rite and dogma, was for French Catholicism an ill-disguised doctrine of unbelief, though Constant, finding no readers for his treatise (published piecemeal at Brussels), exercised no public influence either way. His merits as a political liberal have been latterly extolled, and his novel was artistically important ; but his chief treatise has been ignored.

9. On retrospect, the whole official French philosophy of the period, however conservative in profession, is found to have been at bottom rationalistic, and only superficially friendly to faith. Lamennais had declaimed warmly against indifference in religion, resorting to the old Catholic device, employed by Montaigne, of turning Pyrrhonism against unbelief. Having ostensibly discredited the authority of the senses and the reason (by which he was to be read and understood), he proceeded in the customary way to set up the ancient standard of the *consensus universalis*, the authority of the majority, the least reflective and the most fallacious. This he sought to elevate into a kind of corporate wisdom, superior to all individual judgment ; and he marched straight into the countersense of claiming the pagan consensus as a confirmation of religion in general, while arguing for a religion which claimed to put aside paganism as error. The final logical content of the thesis was the inanity that the majority for the time being must be right.

Damiron,[1] writing his *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au xix^e^ Siècle* in 1828, replies in a fashion more amiable than reassuring, commenting on the "strange scepticism" of Lamennais as to the human reason.[2] For himself, he takes up the parable of Lessing, and declares that where Lessing spoke doubtfully, men had now reached conviction. It was no longer a question of whether, but of when, religion was to be recast in terms of fuller intelligence. "In this religious regeneration we shall be to the Christians what the Christians were to the Jews, and the Jews to the patriarchs : we shall be Christians and something more." The theologian of the future will be half-physicist, half-philosopher. "We shall study God through nature and through men ; and a new Messiah will not be necessary to teach us miraculously what we can learn of ourselves and by our natural lights." Christianity has been a useful discipline ; but "our education is so advanced that henceforth we can be our own teachers ; and, having no need of an extraneous inspiration, we draw faith from science."[3] "Prayer is good, doubtless," but it "has only a mysterious, uncertain, remote action on our environment."[4] All this under Charles X and Louis Philippe, from a professor at the École Normale and the Collège de Louis le Grand.

[1] J. P. Damiron, 1794–1862. Termed by Cousin "the wisest of the wise."
[2] *Essai* cited, i, 232, 237. [3] *Id.* pp. 241–43. [4] *Id.* p. 221.

Not to this day has official academic philosophy in Britain ventured to go so far. In France the brains were never out, even under the Restoration.

10. Lamennais himself gave the proof. His employment of scepticism as an aid to faith had been, like Montaigne's, the expression of a temperament slow to reach rational positions, but driven thitherward. As a boy of twelve, when a priest sought to prepare him for communion, he had shown such abnormal incredulity that the priest gave him up; and later he read omnivorously among the deists of the eighteenth century, Rousseau in particular. Then came for him a religious crisis. He did not become a communicant till he was twenty-two; he entered the seminary only at twenty-seven; and he was ordained when he was nearly thirty-two.

Yet he had experienced much. His *Réflexions sur l'état de l'église* had been suppressed by Napoleon's police; in 1814 he had written, along with his brother, in whose seminary he taught mathematics, a treatise maintaining the papal claims; and in the Hundred Days of 1815 he took flight to London. His mind was always at work. His *Essay on Indifference* expressed his need of a conviction; with unbelief he could reckon and sympathize; with indifference he could not; but when the indifference was by his own account the result of reflective unbelief he treated it in the same fashion as the spontaneous form. At bottom, his quarrel was with reason. Yet the very element in his mind which prompted his anti-rational polemic was partly ratiocinative; and as he slowly reached clearness of thought he came more and more into conflict with Catholicism. It was all very well to flout the individual reason in the name of the universal; but to give mankind a total infallibility was not the way to satisfy a pope or a Church which claimed a monopoly of the gift. In 1824 he was well received by the pope; but when in 1830 he began to write liberal articles in the journal *L'Avenir*, in which he collaborated with Lacordaire, the Comte de Montalembert, and other neo-Catholics, offence was quickly taken, and the journal was soon suspended. Its ideal may be summed up as that of a theocratic or papalist democracy. Lamennais and his disciples Lacordaire and Montalembert went to Rome to plead their cause, but were coldly received; and on their way home in 1832 received at Munich a missive of severe reprimand.

Rendering formal obedience, Lamennais retired, disillusioned, with his friends to his and his brother's estate in Brittany, and began his process of intellectual severance. In January, 1833, he performed mass, and at this stage he held by his artificial distinction between the spheres of faith and reason. In May of that year he declared his determination to place himself "as a writer outside of the Church and Catholicism," declaring that "outside of Catholicism, outside faith, there is reason; outside of the Church there is humanity; I place myself (*je me renferme*) in this sphere."[1] Still he claimed to be *simple fidèle en religion*, and to

[1] *Correspondance*, 1858–86, letter of May 26, 1833.

combine "fidelity in obedience with liberty in science."[1] In January of 1834, however, he had ceased to perform any clerical function; and his *Paroles d'un Croyant*, published in that year, stands for a faith which the Church reckoned as infidelity.

Lacordaire, separating from his insubordinate colleague, published an *Examen de la philosophie de M. de Lamennais*, in which the true papal standpoint was duly taken. Thenceforth Lamennais was an Ishmaelite. Feeling as strongly in politics as in everything else, he was infuriated by the brutal suppression of the Polish rising in 1831–32; and the government of Louis Philippe pleased him as little as that of Charles X had done. In 1841 he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for his brochure *Le pays et le gouvernement* (1840); and in that year appeared the first volume of his *Esquisse d'une Philosophie*, setting forth a form of pantheism, and his *Discussions critiques*. There he rejects all the dogmas of Christianity—miracles, the fall, the incarnation, the redemption, the divinity of Jesus. "In a word, he denies the whole supernatural order, which he declares to be the source of all error and all confusion."[2]

Shortly before his death in 1854 he claimed that he had never changed: "I have gone on, that is all." But he had in effect changed from a Catholic to a non-Christian pantheist;[3] and in 1848, as a member of the National Assembly, he more than once startled his colleagues by "an affectation of impiety."[4] On his death-bed he refused to receive the curé of the parish, and by his own wish he was buried without any religious ceremony, in the *fosse commune* of the poor and with no cross on his grave. But there was a great multitude of mourners.

Such a type does not belong, even finally, to rationalism; and Lamennais never enrolled himself save negatively under that flag. Always emotional and impulsive, he had in his period of aggressive fervour as a Churchman played a rather sinister part in the matter of the temporary insanity of Auguste Comte, lending himself to the unscrupulous tactics of the philosopher's mother, who did not stick at libelling her son's wife in order to get him put under clerical control.[5] It was well for Lamennais that he was forced out of the Church; for his love of liberty was too subjective to have qualified him for a wise use of power. In his mystical pamphlet, *Amschaspands et Darvands* (1843), he shows a savagery of ill-will against Guizot which has shocked even his admirers.[6] But the spectacle of such a temperament forced into antagonism with the Church on moral and social grounds could not but stimulate anti-clericalism in France, whatever his philosophy may have done to promote rational thinking. It justifies the summary that in France, where the downfall of Napoleon meant the restoration of the monarchy, the

[1] Letters of August 1 and November 25.
[2] E. Spuller, *Lamennais, Étude d'histoire politique et religieuse*, 1892, p. 308.
[3] Cp. Ch. Adam, *La Philosophie en France*, 1894, p. 105. [4] Adam, p. 84.
[5] Littré, *Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive*, pp. 123–26. [6] Spuller, p. 310.

religious and intellectual reaction was really much less powerful than in England. The new spirit had been too widely and continuously at work, from Diderot and Voltaire onwards, to be politically expelled; and the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 gave the proof that even on the political side the old spirit was incapable of permanent recovery.

11. The failure of the religious reaction, alike in its imperialist form under Napoleon and in its royalist form under the Restoration, is avowed on retrospect by ardent Catholics who allege "the radical Catholicism of France."[1] After the Restoration, "as regarded the general result, the movement was an utter failure.....When Louis XVIII inserted a *bona fide* clause in his charter constituting the Kingdom Catholic, the Kingdom laughed, laughed in defiance and derision."[2] "Voltaire's works had not been reprinted once under the Empire, but from 1817 to 1824 no less than twelve fresh editions were called for and exhausted in France."[3] The official support of religion had in fact caused a militant revival of free-thought. The predominant anti-clericalism of the revolutionary period had never ceased to exist. In 1828 we find the Protestant Coquerel avowing that in his day the Bourbonism of the Catholic clergy had revived the old anti-clericalism, and that it was common to find the most high-minded patriots unbelievers and materialists.[4] But still more remarkable was the persistence of deep freethinking currents in the Catholic world throughout the century. About 1830 rationalism had become normal among the younger students at Paris;[5] and the revolution of that year elicited a Charter putting all religions on an equality.[6] Soon the throne and the chambers were on a footing of practical hostility to the Church.[7] Under Louis Philippe men dared to teach in the Collège de France that "the Christian dispensation is but *one* link in the chain of divine revelations to man."[8] Even during the first period of reaction after the restoration numerous editions of Volney's *Ruines* and of the *Abrégé*[9] of

[1] Kathleen O'Meara, *Frederic Ozanam, His Life and Works*, 1873, p. 37.

[2] *Id.* p. 47.

[3] *Id.* p. 48. The term "editions" is misleading. There were not twelve *complete* editions of Voltaire's works. But the reprints included the expanded *Dictionnaire Philosophique* in 14 vols.—an arsenal of argument. There were also thirteen "editions" of Rousseau.

[4] Coquerel, *Essai sur l'histoire générale du christianisme*, 1828, préf.

[5] Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, *Diary in France*, 1845, pp. 75–77; *Life of Ozanam*, as cited, pp. 20, 22, 41.

[6] "The miserable and deistical principle of the *equality* of *all* religions" (Wordsworth, p. 188). Cp. pp. 151, 153.

[7] *Id.* pp. 15, 37, 45, 181, 185, 190.

[8] *Id.* pp. 157–61. As to the general vogue of rationalism in France at that period, see pp. 35, 204: and compare Saisset, *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845; *The Progress of Religious Thought as illustrated in the Protestant Church of France*, by Dr. J. R. Beard, 1861; and Wilson's article in *Essays and Reviews*.

[9] Louis Philippe, here departing from the principle of neutrality which marked his reign, significantly sought to suppress this book, of which many editions had appeared before 1830. See Blanco White's *Life*, 1845, ii, 168. A Paris bookseller's list in 1822 announces not only the complete work but two *Abrégés*.

Dupuis's *Origine de tous les Cultes* served to maintain among the more intelligent of the proletariate a partly scientific rationalism, which can hardly be said to have been much improved on later by such historiography as that of Renan's *Vie de Jésus*.

12. And there were other forces, over and above Freemasonry, which in France and other Latin countries has since the Revolution been steadily anti-clerical. The would-be social reconstructor Charles Fourier (1772–1837) was an independent and non-Christian though not an anti-clerical theist, and his system may have counted for something as organizing the secular spirit among the workers in the period of the monarchic and Catholic reaction. Fourier approximated to Christianity inasmuch as he believed in a divine Providence; but like Owen he had an unbounded and heterodox faith in human goodness and perfectibility; and he claimed to have discovered the "plan of God" for men. But Fourier was not long, like Owen, a popular force; and popular rationalism went on other lines. At no time was the proletariate of Paris otherwise than largely Voltairean after the Revolution, of which one of the real services (carried on by Napoleon) was an improvement in popular education. The rival non-Christian systems of Saint-Simon (1760–1825) and Auguste Comte (1798–1857) also never took any practical hold among them; but throughout the century they have been fully the most freethinking working-class population in the world.

13. The movement of Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon, which had an influence among the utopistic intellectual youth of France and Germany out of all proportion to its political importance, is a notable product of pre-revolutionary freethought and post-revolutionary zeal for social reconstruction. A heedless, adventurous, undisciplined aristocrat, he passed from wealth to a state of beggary in which he sought to commit suicide; but, sustained by the late-developed faith that his unstudied inspirations could yield a social science for mankind, he had set about framing a kaleidoscopic series of schemes to that end. Like his sometime secretary and successor in society-planning, Auguste Comte, he had early given up all normal religious belief, though with chronic relapses, finally retaining only the common conviction that the mass of uneducated mankind needed "some religion or other."

Saint-Simon for a time contemplated deism as their general resort, rather than Christianity; but at the close of his tumultuous career of visionary propaganda he proclaimed a '*Nouveau Christianisme*' which was to be in effect a religion of philanthropy. A more egotistic Shelley, he found in that his final pivot, and he ultimately contemplated the future in an evolutionary sense, foreseeing many stages, and anticipating a society in which Government should manage the machinery of industry and commerce without seeking further to control men. By upbringing and temperament an aristocrat, he had sought the adherence of educated idealists rather than that of the people; but industrial reconstruction

became the final form of his social ideal. Himself an *exalté*, he inspired by his writings, after his death, other *exaltés*, only one of whom had ever seen him, to attempt the realization of his ideals. Of those, Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin (1796–1864), known in the movement as 'Père Enfantin,' and Armand Bazard, were soon at odds over the stumbling-block of sex ethics.

Saint-Simon, in one of his inspirations, had the idea of proclaiming "the rehabilitation of the flesh" as against ecclesiastical asceticism; and in the attempt to come to some rule on the subject the idealists landed in schisms. The whole imbroglio was time and again food for the laughter of Paris; and the movement, which lasted long on paper, producing a huge literature, became a backwater of social doctrinairism, save in so far as one or two of the ideals were taken up by other schools, some of them practical. On the religious side, Saint-Simonism was finally a factor as against the orthodox Catholic tendency, making for the general view that religion is a social function, and is to be so dealt with. Enfantin, a charming personality, contributed nothing to critical thought.

14. The system of Auguste Comte undoubtedly derived from that of Saint-Simon at several main points,[1] though Comte brought to the task a more systematic mind, a much wider knowledge, and a more solid personality—albeit, in some regards, with a narrower outlook. Yet when he in turn, adopting Paine's phrase of "the Religion of Humanity," proceeded to build on his 'Philosophie Positive' (1830–42) a 'Politique Positive' (1851–54), which included, as part of the structure of a new 'Spiritual Power,' a system of worship, with Ideal Humanity in place of Deity, and his deceased friend Clotilde de Vaux as impersonating the Virgin Mother or Female Ideal—a notion partly derived from the Saint-Simonians—he soon alienated numbers of the stronger brains who had seen in his Positive Philosophy a substantially sound and illuminative formulation of intellectual problems. Yet even on that side it had been, with all its parade of science, seriously anti-scientific, forbidding as it did the very lines of inquiry which were soon to build up a new evolutionary science.[2]

Comtism, in fact, though it has subsisted in a nuclear form for a faithful few, has never captured the general idealist imagination as Saint-Simonism long did in France and elsewhere, though Comte hoped it would. In taking up an anti-theological position, he chose to assume that the critical work had been done once for all, at the same time often disparaging the men who did it. In reality, the work had been done

[1] Lewes, who seems to argue both ways, hesitantly, says in so many words that, "*as a detail* in the *biographical* evolution of Comte's *own* mind, it is, I think, undeniable that the influence of St.-Simon was *decisive*" (*Hist. of Philos.*, ed. 1871, ii, 649).

[2] See the particularly contemptuous reference to "the ambitious dreams of a misty atheism relative to the formation of the universe, the origin of animals, etc," cited by Lewes (*Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences*, p. 24) from the *Discours sur l'ensemble de Positivisme*, without any apparent conception of what he was doing.

only for an intellectual minority; and inasmuch as his followers made him at once their lawgiver instead of seeking to revise and develop his ideas, he and they contributed little to the diffusion of rational views on religion among the majority. At best he reinforced the philanthropic trend.

In deciding that the time had arrived for a definitive reconstruction of society, with the manifold problem of religion solved by the fiat of a theorist, Comte, like Saint-Simon, reveals the inability of the idealists of that age to see that social transformation is inevitably gradual, even in times of political cataclysm. For them, all strife of opinion was "anarchy," and, taking for granted that this was a modern disease, unknown to the Middle Ages, they prescribed for it a strait-waistcoat, on medieval lines. Having seen many political cataclysms made by violence, they thought to effect a beneficent intellectual and moral cataclysm by persuasion, when at best they could influence only small minorities. The hiatus between ideal and practice was unbridgeable; the faith in the possibility unshakeable for the schemers.

As to Saint-Simonism see Weil, *Saint-Simon et son Œuvre*, 1894; A. J. Booth, *Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism*, 1871 (with an appendix giving many extracts to show the Comtist filiation); and the very diligent and intelligent study and exposition by Miss E. M. Butler, of Newnham College, *The Saint-Simonian Religion in Germany*, 1926, which retrieves much German biographical material. See also an interesting testimony as to the Saint-Simonian sect in Renan's *Les Apôtres*, p. 148. The hostile criticism of Louis Reybaud, in his *Études sur les réformateurs et socialistes modernes* (1840, 4e édit. 1844), is inexact, but has a contemporaneous vivacity.

The critical case as to Comte's religious polity is put by J. S. Mill in his *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, 2nd ed. rev. 1866; and by Lewes, *Hist. of Philosophy*, as cited, ii, 735 sq.; and is discussed by the present writer in *Spoken Essays*, 1925, p. 193 sq. On the other side see L. Lévy-Bruhl, *The Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Eng. trans., 1903; and J. H. Bridges, *The Unity of Comte's Life and Doctrine: A Letter to J. S. Mill*, 1866 and 1910. An eminently impartial and competent estimate is supplied in Mr. T. Whittaker's little book, *Comte and Mill*, 1908.

As to Fourier see the *Œuvres Choisies de Fourier*, ed. Ch. Gide, pp. 1–3, 9. Cp. *Solidarité: Vue Synthétique sur la doctrine de Ch. Fourier*, par Hippolyte Renaud, 3e édit. 1846, ch. i: "Pour ramener l'homme à la foi" [en Dieu], writes Renaud, "il faut lui offrir aujourd'hui une foi complète et composée, une foi solidement assise sur le témoignage de la raison. Pour cela il faut que le flambeau de la science dissipe toutes les obscurités" (p. 9). This is not propitious to dogma; but Fourier planned and promised to leave priests and ministers undisturbed in his new world, and even declared religions to be "much superior to uncertain sciences." Gide, introd. to

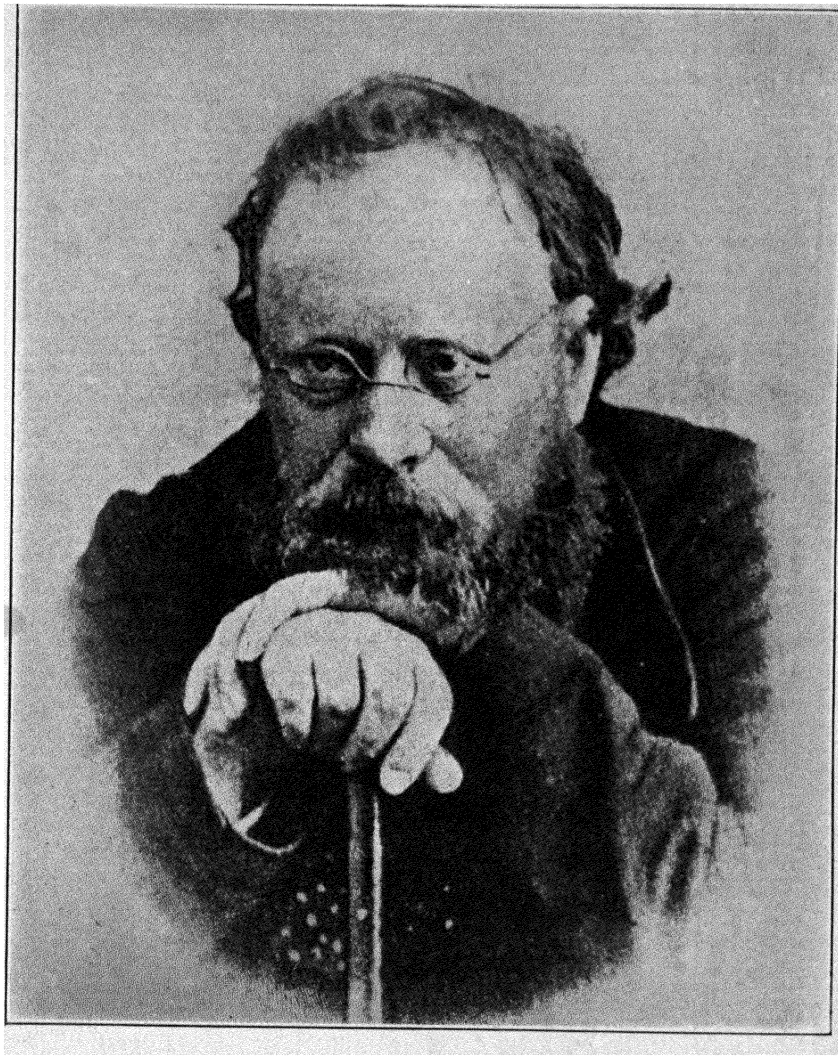
Œuvres Choisies, pp. xxii–xxiii, citing Manuscrits, vol. de 1853–56, p. 293. Cp. Dr. C. Pellarin, *Fourier, sa vie et sa théorie*, 5e édit. p. 143.

The generation after the fall of Napoleon was pre-eminently the period of new schemes of society; and it is noteworthy that they were all non-Christian, though all, including even Owen's, claimed finally to provide a "religion," and many Frenchmen seemed convinced by Napoleon's practice that some kind of cult must be provided for the peoples. Owen alone rejected alike supernaturalism and cultus, though he talked of "a rational religion"; and his movement left the most definite rationalistic traces. All seem to have been generated by the double influence of (1) the social failure of the French Revolution, which left so many anxious for another and more comprehensive effort at reconstruction, and (2) of the spectacle of the rule of Napoleon, which seems to have elicited new ideals of beneficent autocracy. Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, and Comte were all alike would-be founders of a new society or social religion. It seems probable that this proclivity to crude and Utopian systematic reconstruction, in a world which still carried a panic-memory of one great social overturn, helped to lengthen the rule of orthodoxy. Considerably more progress was made when freethought became detached from special plans of polity, and grew up anew by way of sheer truth-seeking on all the lines of inquiry.

15. The hindrance lay in the nature of the struggle, at once social and mental. If the Revolution "devoured her children," she on the other hand bore a new brood, stamped as it were with her image. One of the salient features of the French mental life of the age is the rapid transformation of the opinions of individual men, as if each were fated, in his own person, to reproduce every phase of the sequence of reaction. Saint-Simon begins the line, passing through a series of shifting convictions; and Lamennais, Comte, Cabet, Fourier, Leroux, and a multitude of their disciples with them, pass in varying degrees through similar metamorphoses. Cabet, beginning as a liberator, ends as a petty dictator, and is as such expelled by his following. Of all the line none is more remarkable, in point of personality, originality, and critical energy, than Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65).

He was not, as has been said, self-educated, having been at college from sixteen till nineteen; but he was of a temperament that would always have exhibited immaturity of discipline had he been through life an academic. At every stage of his career, as he himself finally avowed on retrospect, he felt he had reached decisive truths, and proclaimed them. Beginning working life as a compositor, he soon became a press corrector, and, eagerly carrying on his studies, boldly produced at twenty-nine an 'Essay on General Grammar,' applying the obsolete assumption as to one original language, from which all others derived.[1] Soon his

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *P.-J. Proudhon, Sa vie et sa Correspondance*, 1872, p. 20 sq.



PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON

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literary energy won him a Besançon bursary; and his next effort was a competitive essay (1839) on 'The Utility of Sunday Observance.' Whatever his theme, he thought upon it freshly and vigorously, and, prepared for democratic politics by his training and sympathies, as were Etienne Cabet and Pierre Leroux, he became speedily a noted propagandist.

Chaste and frugal, he earned imprisonment by the violence of some of his language; highly intelligent, he ran an impossible bank. At bottom a Puritan, he was always averse from the semblance of moral licence; and even after publishing his famous pamphlet 'What is Property?', with its paradox "Property is theft," he privately repugned against the aggressive heresy of Lamennais, severely blaming the "apostate," and declaring that Christianity ought not to be attacked but to be more deeply interpreted.[1] Yet within five years he had published his 'System of Economic Contradictions, or Philosophy of Indigence' [Misère],[2] in which he sets out with a radical challenge to all religion and finishes with mordant criticisms of Christianity. And he left behind him *Les Évangiles annotés* (posthumously published, 1866), prefaced by the declaration that the gospels are "a pale legend, imitated and compiled after the fables of the Jewish books." By these works he belongs very definitely to the history of freethought.

To no other man would it have occurred to introduce a treatise on 'Economic Contradictions' with a prologue on the God-idea, showing that that too is an antinomy, a plexus of contradictions; that spirit and matter are alike necessary and unthinkable hypotheses; and that theism and materialism are alike absurd. Proudhon's thought, in point of fact, always proceeded by a notation of antinomies. His "property is theft" is but one of these perceptions; no one was quicker with a confutation of any proposal to make of it a principle of confiscation. He thus belongs always to the philosophic camp even when ostensibly battling for political action. In the end he thought himself out of militant Socialism into philosophic Anarchism. His specialty as a man and as a force is thus continuous inner movement, always intellectually sincere, yet always propounding changes of view.

Thus he becomes for us, as it were, one of his own antinomies, ever reacting spontaneously, sometimes crudely, yet always in some degree intellectually, against every proposition, including his own of the moment, and so incarnating for us the process of growing judgment in a distracting environment. He is at once philosophic, revolutionary, sincere, changeable, utopian, judicious. What mental effect such a mind really wrought on his generation it is hard to calculate. He exasperated the rigidly fanatical Karl Marx, alienated most innovating

[1] Letter to Ackermann, 16 Mai, 1841, in Sainte-Beuve, p. 117.

[2] Marx retorted with a *Misère de philosophie*, being determined that philosophy should not invade *his* realm of dogma.

schools by his uncannily destructive criticism of their formulas, and left no lasting school of his own, though he had disciples at the end of the century. We can but say that he is stimulating to critical thought. Other leading French Socialists of his day, if less fertile in readjustments, were less impressive, and are finally less important for history.

16. Pierre Leroux (1798–1871) was definitely non-Christian, yet in a relatively amiable, philanthropic, and philosophic fashion, though his private talk could be very aggressive. Beginning as a Saint-Simonian, he broke with Enfantin on the sex question, and started what came to be known as the 'Humanitarian' movement, propounding his system in his treatise *De l'humanité* (1839). It was in sum a demand for a more scientific system of reciprocal philanthropy than that provided by Christianity; and was accompanied, in the fashion of Proudhon, by an exposition of the antinomies of the family and the community, the individual and the State, law and freedom. In philosophy he was a pantheist of a special brand, with a "triad" principle in which God and man were strangely specialized. Making no impression with his philosophy, he proved to be equally uninfluential in politics when elected in 1849 to the Legislative Assembly. His amiable heresy had been popular enough, so far as it was known; it was the age of loose liberalism in all fields; what cancelled him was his irrelevance to practical problems.[1]

17. On the other hand, the contemptuous though conservative disregard of the disestablished Church by the State in the reign of Louis Philippe actually generated a new Catholic reaction by throwing Catholics on their own initiative. Canon Wordsworth notes how the humiliation of the Bishops and clergy created a new and sincere Ultramontanism,[2] the clergy turning to the Pope as their sole hope and representative. In the life of Frédéric Ozanam, again, we see the spontaneous play of Catholic zeal, resentful of rationalistic contempt,[3] and finding support from the multitude of passive Catholics who previously had lacked heart to avow themselves. The movement was ignorant and fanatical, despite the young Ozanam's claims to scholarship; but that did not weaken it as an appeal to faith. When it evolved a systematic organization for Catholic works of charity, it succeeded as no polemic could have done;[4] and the eloquence of Lacordaire gave it the needed mouthpiece.

Ozanam (1813–53), dear to Catholic memory for his warm devotion to the cause, is one of the most interesting examples of the survival of religion as psychic heredity. Intellectual enough to be much shaken by

[1] A book has been written on Leroux by a Christian ex-professor, Celestin Raillard (*Pierre Leroux et ses Œuvres*, Chateauroux, 1899), who disapproved of his pantheism and his socialism, and therefore could not subscribe to his statue, but nevertheless esteemed him.

[2] As cited, pp. 37–9, 57, 190.

[3] In 1849 Ozanam wrote of "those hisses which, twenty years ago, pursued the Christian to the door of the church" (*Life*, p. 329). This seems hyperbolical; but there was a basis.

[4] *Life* cited, p. 80.

doubt in his teens, he escaped in the approved fashion by pious exercises ;[1] and his pro-Catholic polemic was one of forensic asseveration. In him there was no philosophic element such as was at work in contemporary Germany. The declaration of nascent hierological science that all religion had begun in fetishism he simply dismissed with scorn ;[2] and to a friendly freethinker he wrote that all doctrines of liberty, tolerance, and fraternity "descend from Calvary."[3] At that period, however, he had the depressing experience of finding his most zealous co-religionaries "lapsing into the same road which had led the men of the Restoration to ruin."[4] For they in their turn, growing politically reactionary under fear, flaunted the flag of clericalism and fanaticism, and miscarried accordingly.

Ozanam's counsels of conciliatory policy, in due course, brought upon him fanatical odium, as "a Catholic who had ceased to believe in hell ;"[5] though it had in fact been fear of the Judgment Day that, with pious practice, had kept him orthodox in youth, and he had never abandoned the tenet.[6] In the end, dying in 1853, he can hardly have had any more sense of security for his cause under the new Empire than for himself in the next world, tormented as he was with a sense of sin, and of having caused scandal. A pathological case, he belongs to an age in which—in England as in France—educated men still had medieval terrors in their blood, and in their nerves a tumult that vetoed the rule of reason even while they strove to be in their own way reasonable. Less sincere spirits than he were to exploit the official reaction which set in with the Second Empire. But that was visibly, even in its own day, an alliance between Church and Court and *bourgeoisie* against the rationalistic liberalism which in the 'forties had established the short-lived second republic. The new reaction in fact was but a duplication of that which had followed the first Revolution.

Canon Wordsworth's *Diary in France* is synchronous with a work by a Spanish Catholic priest (*A Donde vamos a parar?* ["Where are we going to stop?"], *Ojeada sobra las tendencias de la epoca actual*, por el presbitero J. Gaume, Vicario general de la diócesis de Nevers, caballero de la Orden de S. Silvestre, individuo de la Academia de la Religion Católica en Roma, etc., Madrid, 1845) which notably chimes with it in tone and purport. For the Catholic and the Anglican alike, in 1845, France is the visible scene of the coming of Antichrist. Lamartine, describing Reason as "the permanent revelation of God, whose direction we must in no respect sacrifice" (p. 194), is for the Spanish priest as blasphemous as are the direct assailants of Christianity for the English Canon.

Neither ecclesiastic says anything in particular about the amount of freethinking in his own country ; but they are quite agreed in

[1] *Life* cited, pp. 9–10. [2] P. 31. [3] P. 327.
[4] Pp. 329–30. [5] P. 331. [6] Pp. 332, 450.

seeing the state of things in France to be portentous. Their spontaneous testimonies form an interesting commentary on the pretence of de Tocqueville and others a few years later as to the substantial orthodoxy of French society. Wordsworth, in particular, gives the results of his personal observation. Gaume sees as much harm in Cousin (p. 70) and in Lamartine as in the open Antichrists ; but he tells of the multiplication of impious journals, and of editions of Voltaire, in Paris and Brussels, since the fall of the Empire (pp. 75–6). He also tells of the singing of impious songs in the streets of Paris (p. 74, *note*). He further alleges (pp. 77–8) a great increase of French crime between 1827 and 1841.

Further, he avows (p. 81) that the movement of religious revival "has not communicated itself to the multitude ; it has in no way influenced social conversion to Christian principles." It is edifying to remember that Spain, where alone Christian principles were supposed to survive, and which was near entering on a ten-years' period (1844–54) of Conservative rule under the child-queen Isabel, had been long the scene of chronic revolt, and Catholic Portugal had fallen into anarchy. In 1849 Spain led in the undertaking of the Catholic powers to restore the temporal rule of the Pope, which had been for the time overthrown. It was in that age of Christian regeneration that Isabel's child (1850) was commonly believed to have been killed within an hour of its birth by the Montpensier faction (*Modern Spain*, by H. B. Clarke, 1906, p. 208).

§ 3. *Germany: Illusory Reaction*

Of all the European countries, probably, Germany suffered least from intellectual retrogression in the revolutionary and Napoleonic period. There freethinking was associated not with the beaten cause of the Revolution, to which young Germany had given much sympathy at its outset, but in large measure with the national movement for liberation from the tyranny of Napoleon ;[1] and the religious reaction was substantially emotional and unintellectual, though it had gifted representatives, notably Schleiermacher. Apart from his culture-movement, the revival consisted mainly in a new Pietism, partly orthodox, partly mystical ;[2] and on those lines it ran later to gross excesses. But among the educated classes of Germany there was the minimum of arrest, because there the intellectual life was least directly associated with the

[1] Thus the traveller and belletrist J. G. Seume, a zealous deist and opponent of atheism, and a no less zealous patriot, penned many fiercely freethinking maxims, as : "Where were the most so-called positive religions, there was always the least morality ;" "Grotius and the Bible are the best supports of despotism ;" "Heaven has lost us the earth ;" "The best apostles of despotism and slavery are the mystics." *Apokryphen*, 1806–7, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 1839, iv, 157, 173, 177, 219.

[2] C. H. Cotterill, *Religious Movements of Germany*, 1849, p. 12 *sq.*

political, and the ecclesiastical life relatively the least organized. The great names of the day were Kant, Goethe, and Schiller, all three free-thinking minds; Schiller being really more powerful as a thinker than as a poet. The very separateness of the German States, then and later so often deplored by German patriots, was really a condition of relative security for freedom of thought and research; and the resulting multiplicity of universities meant a variety of intellectual effort not then paralleled in any other country.[1]

An educated Germany in which Kant had discredited concrete in the act of setting up an abstract religion was even less open than France to pious reaction. The young Crabb Robinson, travelling in Germany in 1801, tells of a long interview with a parish clergyman at Colditz, who bore

> "a name singularly in contrast with his character—Hildebrand; for he was very liberal in his opinions, and very anti-church in his tastes.....He gave me an account of the state of religious opinion among the Saxon, i.e. Lutheran, clergy. He professed himself a believer in miracles, but evidently had no unfriendly feeling towards the free-thinkers, whom he called *Naturalisten*, but who are now better known under the name of Rationalists. He declared that their ablest men were Socinians, if not Naturalists. On my saying that Michaelis's *Introduction to the New Testament* had been translated into English, he said, 'That work is already forgotten here; we have a more learned commentary in the work of Paulus.' On my inquiring whether the clergy had no tests, 'Oh, yes,' he replied, 'we affirm our belief in the symbolical books; but we have a very convenient saving clause: "as far as they are not contradictory to the word of God." The fact is, we pay very little attention to the old orthodox doctrines, but dare not preach against them. We say nothing about them.' This I believe to be true."[2]

Paulus, thus acceptable to the professed clerical believer in miracles, was an absolute anti-supernaturalist. Crabb Robinson, meeting him later after listening to one of his lectures at Heidelberg, desired to know whether he had rightly understood him as asserting that a man might absolutely disbelieve in miracles, and all prophecy and inspiration, and yet be a Christian. The professor's answer was: "Don't imagine, Mr. Robinson, that I mean anything personally disrespectful when I say that that seems to me a foolish question. Why, it implies that Christianity may have something to do with inspiration, with prophecy, or with miracle; but it has nothing to do with them. (*Er hat nichts damit zu thun.*)"

German rationalism did not maintain the hardy thoroughness of that of Paulus, whose method of interpreting all miracles as misconceptions of actual events became at points a theme of ridicule; but he was an outspoken and for long an influential representative of the attitude already

[1] Cp. the author's *Evolution of States*, pp. 138–9. [2] *Diary*, i, 94–5.

prevalent among scholars. Revolt against orthodoxy was the mark of the vigorous minds of the day, with rare exceptions such as Niebuhr, who was in fact quite heretical as to prophecy while insisting on absolute evangelical orthodoxy.[1] The young Hegel, writing to Schelling in 1795, is explosive in his hostility to the official system :—

> Orthodoxy cannot be shaken so long as its profession is interwoven with worldly advantage, and bound up with the structure of the State. An interest like this is too strong to be readily surrendered, and has an effect as a whole of which people are hardly aware. While this is so, it has on its side the whole troop—ever the most numerous—of clamorous devotees, void of thought and of higher interests. If a mob like this reads something opposed to their convictions (if one is to do their pedantic jargon the honour of calling it by that name), the truth of which they cannot deny, they will say, "Yes, I suppose it is true," and then go to bed, and next morning drink their coffee as if nothing had happened. But I think it would be interesting to molest, in their ant-like industry, the theologians who are fetching up critical [Kantian] materials to prop their Gothic temple, to whip them out of all their refuges, till they could find no more, and should have to reveal their nakedness before the sun. I shall do all I can.....Our watchword shall be Reason and Freedom, and our rallying-point the invisible Church.[2]

Hegel was destined to attempt, in his turn, to frame a philosophy "bound up with the structure of the State," and his invective well specifies the forces constantly massed on the side of inertia ; but his mood was too widespread in the Germany of the Napoleonic period to permit of any orthodox reaction on the English scale.

As to the absolute predominance of rationalistic unbelief (in the orthodox sense of the word) in educated Germany in the first third of the century, see the *Memoirs of F. Perthes*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. ii, 240–45, 255, 266–75. Despite the various reactions claimed by Perthes and others, it is clear that the tables have never since been turned. Cp. Pearson, *Infidelity*, pp. 554–59, 569–74. Schleiermacher was charged on his own side with making fatal concessions. Kahnis, *Internal Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856, pp. 210–11 ; Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, i, 181 ; and Quinet as there cited.

It is true that the relative selectness of culture, the comparative aloofness of the "enlightened" from the mass of the people, made possible after the War of Independence a certain pietistic reaction, in the absence of any popular propagandist machinery or purpose on the side of the rationalists. In the opinion of an evangelical authority, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "through modern enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) the people had become indifferent to the Church ; the Bible was regarded as a merely human book, the Saviour merely as a person

[1] *Life and Letters*, Eng. trans. i, 339 ; ii, 123.

[2] *Briefe*, ed. Karl Hegel, p. 11, cited by B. Bosanquet, *Essays and Addresses*, 1889, pref.

who had lived and taught long ago, not as one whose almighty presence is with his people still."[1] According to the same authority, "before the war the indifference to the word of God which prevailed among the upper classes had penetrated to the lower; but after it a desire for the Scriptures was everywhere felt."[2] This involves an admission that the "religion of the heart" propounded by Schleiermacher in his Addresses *On Religion* "to the educated among its despisers"[3] (1799) was not really a Christian revival at all. The addresses[4] were produced after much solicitation from Schleiermacher's friend Friedrich Schlegel, and the addressees were primarily the "romantics" of the Schlegel group, who were largely indifferentists, though some of them, like Friedrich Schlegel, finally turned Catholic. Schleiermacher himself in 1803 declared that in Prussia there was almost no attendance on public worship, and the clergy had fallen into profound discredit.[5]

So far as governmental pressure could go, it was of course on the side of orthodoxy. In 1799 Fichte[6] is found expressing extreme alarm at the combination of the European despotisms to "root out freethought"; and, according to Heine, all the German philosophers and their ideas would have been suppressed by wheel and gallows but for Napoleon,[7] who intervened in 1805.

A pietistic movement had, however, begun during the period of the French ascendancy;[8] and, seeing that the freethinking of the previous generation had been in part associated with French opinion, it was natural that on this side anti-French feeling should promote a reversion to older and more "national" forms of thought. Thus after the fall of Napoleon the tone of the students who had fought in the war seems to have been more religious than that of previous years.[9] Inasmuch, however, as the "enlightenment" of the scholarly class was maintained, and applied anew to critical problems, the religious revival did not turn back the course of progress. "When the third centenary commemoration, in 1817, of the Reformation approached, the Prussian people were in a state of

[1] Pastor W. Baur, Hamburg, *Religious Life in Germany during the Wars of Independence*, Eng. tr. 1872, p. 41. H. J. Rose and Pusey, in their controversy as to the causes of German rationalism, were substantially at one on this point of fact. Rose, *Letter to the Bishop of London*, 1829, pp. 19, 150, 161.

[2] *Id.* p. 481.

[3] *Ueber die Religion: Reden an die gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern.* These are discussed hereinafter.

[4] The modern practice of translating the title of the *Reden* as *Speeches* is misleading. They were never delivered as speeches.

[5] Lichtenberger, *Hist. of Ger. Theol. in the Nineteenth Cent.*, Eng. tr. 1889, pp. 122–3.

[6] Letter of May 22, 1799, reproduced by Heine.

[7] *Zur Gesch. der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland. Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 96, 98.

[8] See the same volume, *passim.*

[9] Karl von Raumer, *Contrib. to the Hist. of the German Universities*, Eng. tr. 1859, p. 79. The intellectual tone of W. Baur and K. von Raumer certainly protects them from any charge of "enlightenment."

stolid indifference, apparently, on religious matters."[1] Alongside of the pietistic reaction of the Liberation period there went on an open ecclesiastical strife, dating from an anti-rationalist declaration by the Court preacher Reinhard at Dresden in 1811,[2] between the rationalists or "Friends of Light" and the Scripturalists of the old school; and the effect was a general disintegration of orthodoxy, despite, or it may be largely in virtue of, the governmental policy of rewarding the Pietists and discouraging their opponents in the way of official appointments.[3] The Prussian measure (1817) of forcibly uniting the Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches, with a neutral sacramental ritual in which the eucharist was treated as a historical commemoration, tended to the same consequences, though it also revived old Lutheran zeal;[4] and when the new revolutionary movement broke out in 1848 popular feeling was substantially non-religious. "In the south of Germany especially the conflict of political opinions and revolutionary tendencies produced, in the first instance, an entire prostration of religious sentiment." The bulk of society showed entire indifference to worship, the churches being everywhere deserted; and "atheism was openly avowed, and Christianity ridiculed as the invention of priestcraft."[5] One result was a desperate effort of the clergy to "effect a union among all who retained any measure of Christian belief, in order to raise up their national religion and faith from the lowest state into which it has ever fallen since the French Revolution."

The movement of emotional religion set up by Schleiermacher at the beginning of the century was no more enduring as a social force than the others. Schleiermacher himself gave forth, for reasoning minds, an irretrievably uncertain sound. His case and that of his father, an army chaplain, tell signally of the power of the mere clerical occupation to develop a species of emotional belief in one who has even attained rationalism. When the son, trained for the Church, avowed to his father (1787) that he had lost faith in the supernatural Jesus, the father professed to mourn bitterly, but three years later avowed that he in his own youth had preached Christianity for twelve years while similarly disbelieving its fundamental tenet.[6] He professionally counselled compromise, which the son duly practised, with such success that, whereas he originally addressed his discourses *On Religion* (1799) to "the educated among its

[1] Laing, *Notes of a Traveller*, 1842, p. 181. Dr. W. B. Selbie, with Lichtenberger, notes that Schleiermacher himself avowed "the indifference of the people to religious observances" (*Schleiermacher, a Critical and Historical Study*, 1913, p. 231).

[2] C. H. Cotterill, *Relig. Movements of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, 1849, pp. 39–40.

[3] *Id.* pp. 27–8, 41–2.

[4] Cp. Laing, as cited, pp. 206–7, 211.

[5] Cotterill, as cited, p. 84.

[6] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben: In Briefen*, 1860, i, 42, 84. The father's letters, with their unctuous rhetoric, are a revelation of the power of declamatory habit to eliminate sincere thought.

despisers," he was able to say in the preface to the third edition, twenty years later (1821), that the need now was to reason with the pietists and literalists, the ignorant and bigoted, the credulous and superstitious.[1] In short, he and others had been able to set up a fashion of poetic religion among deists and liberal theologians, but not to lighten the darkness of orthodox belief.

The ostensible religious revival associated with Schleiermacher's name was in fact a reaction of temperament, akin to the romantic movement in literature, of which Chateaubriand in France was the exponent as regarded religious feeling, though on a more thoughtful plane. The German "rationalism" of the transition period, with its confident translation of the miraculous into the historical and its official accommodation of the result to the purposes of the pulpit, had not reached any firm scientific foundation; and Schleiermacher on the other side, protesting that religion was a matter not of knowledge but of feeling and of conscious dependence, attracted alike the religious emotionalists, the seekers of compromise, and the romantics. By verbally distinguishing between religion and dogma he supplied comfort to generations of loose thinkers who could not realize that to say "religion is matter of feeling" is only to frame a new dogma, an asseveration ending in itself, and dogmatically evading the obvious retort that a systematized "religion of feeling" is a process of thought *on* feeling. To this day the verbal device is dear to the professional compromisers and their lay clients.

Schleiermacher's personal and literary charm, and his tolerance of mundane morals, gave him a German vogue not unlike that of Chateaubriand in France. His critical cast and quasi-philosophic bias, however, together with his relative freedom of private life,[2] ultimately alienated him from the orthodox, and thus it was that he died (1834) in the odour of heresy. Heresy, in fact, he had preached from the outset; and it was only in a highly emancipated society that his teaching could have been fashionable. The statement that by his *Addresses* "with one stroke he overthrew the card-castle of rationalism and the old fortress of orthodoxy"[3] is literally false, for the old compromising pseudo-rationalism survived him a long while, and the old orthodoxy still longer; and it is quite misleading inasmuch as it suggests a resurgence of faith among the laity. The same historian proceeds to record that some saw in the work "only a slightly disguised return to superstition, and others a brilliant

[1] *Werke*, 1843, i, 140.

[2] See Kahnis, p. 214 and refs., as to his relations with Frau Grunow. "He belonged to the circle of Prince Louis, in which intellect and art, but not morality," reigned. *Ib.* Compare the sympathetic Lichtenberger, *Hist. of Ger. Theol. in the Nineteenth Cent.*, Eng. tr. 1889, pp. 103–4. It was of course his clerical function that disadvantaged Schleiermacher in such matters.

[3] Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 87. The same sweeping assertion is made by Dr. W. B. Selbie in his *Schleiermacher, a Critical and Historical Study*, 1913, p. 238.

confession of unbelief."[1] "The general public saw in the *Addresses* a new assault of romanticism upon religion. The clergy in particular were painfully aroused, and did not dissemble their irritation. Spalding himself could not restrain his anger." Schleiermacher's friend Sach, who had passed the *Addresses* in manuscript, woke up to denounce them as unchristian, pantheistic, and denuded of the ideas of God, immortality, and morality.[2] In strict fact, by reducing religious belief to sheer feeling, it put all religions on the same plane of mere self-assertion.

In England the work would have been so denounced on all sides; and the bulk of Schleiermacher's teaching would there have been reckoned revolutionary and "godless." He was a lover of both political and social freedom; and in his 'Two Memoranda on the Church Question in regard to Prussia' (1803) he made "a veritable declaration of war on the clerical spirit."[3] Recognizing that ecclesiastical discipline had reached a low ebb, he even proposed that civil marriage should precede religious marriage, and be alone obligatory; besides planning a drastic subjection of the Prussian Church to State regulation.[4] In his pamphlet on 'The So-called Epistle to Timothy,' of which he denied the authenticity, he played the part of a "destructive" critic.[5] He "saw with pain the approach of the rising tide of confessionalism"—that is, the movement for an exact and honest statement of creed.[6] Nor can it be said that, despite his attempts in later life to reach a more definite theology, Schleiermacher really held firmly any Christian or even theistic dogma. He was essentially a pantheist;[7] and the secret of his attraction for so many German preachers and theologians then and since is that he offered them in eloquent and moving diction a kind of profession of faith which avoided alike the fatal undertaking of the old religious rationalism to reduce the sacred narratives to terms of reason, and the dogged refusal of orthodoxy to admit that there was anything to explain away.

Philosophically and critically speaking, his teaching has no intellectual substance, being first a negation of intellectual tests and then a belated attempt to apply them.[8] It is not even original, being proximately a development from Rousseau and Lessing, and fundamentally a

[1] Hegel seems to imply (*Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. i, 51) that by relegating God to "the region of accidental subjectivity" the Schleiermacher account of religion as "matter of feeling" had promoted atheism.

[2] Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 89.

[3] *Id.* p. 109. [4] *Id.* pp. 123–4. [5] *Id.* p. 119. [6] *Id.* p. 129.

[7] Strauss, *Die Halben und die Ganzen*, 1865, p. 18. This judgment is practically accepted by a recent English panegyrist, Dr. A. S. Peake (Lect. on The History of Theology in the series *Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed., 1915, pp. 136, 143), who yet professes to stand for theism. He notes that Baur and Zeller found in Schleiermacher positive equivocation on the point.

[8] Hegel, naturally exasperated by the logical inadequacy of his professorial colleague, retorted on the definition of religion as "the sense of absolute dependence" that on that view the dog is the most religious of all creatures. Disturbed theologians fail to parry the thrust.

mere reiteration of the "sense of absolute dependence" which is the emotional germ of Hebraic religion.[1] But in respect of its attitude to dogma it had undoubtedly a freeing and civilizing influence in Germany for many years; and it did little harm save insofar as it fostered the German proclivity to the nebulous in thought and language, and partly encouraged the normal resistance to the critical spirit. All irrationalism, to be sure, in some sort spells self-will and lawlessness; but the orthodox negation of reason was far more primitive than Schleiermacher's. From that side, accordingly, he never had any sympathy. When, soon after his funeral, in which his coffin was borne and followed by troops of students, his church was closed to the friends who wished there to commemorate him, it was fairly clear that his own popularity lay mainly with the progressive spirits, and not among the orthodox; and in the end his influence tended to merge in that of the critical movement.[2] Reactions of a kind were to occur later from time to time; but that represented by the name of Schleiermacher in Germany hardly earned the name.[3]

When he is represented by professional theologians, on retrospect, as "epoch-making" in respect of his influence on subsequent theological "thought," it is necessary to point out that what he effected was a lead to such theologians as distinguished from thorough and competent thinkers. They naturally see the history of "thought" in the history of ecclesiastical vogue. Eduard Zeller, himself emancipated in his theological youth by influences which included Schleiermacher, warmly acclaims him as a widely fruitful force (*Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie*, 1873, pp. 753–74). And this is just, inasmuch as Schleiermacher, without ever attaining a philosophic or critical position tenable for the scientific thinker, helped young men in the theological schools to transmute their dogmas without facing ultimate issues. Modern sympathizers admit the justice of Strauss's claim that his God-doctrine derives from Spinoza, and complain that he "quite fails to develop the conception of the personality of God."[4]

At the same time, however, he enabled many accommodators to set up a new reign of pretentious fallacy. He taught them to dismiss, as "arid," alike the old body of incredible dogma, the critical

[1] "An emphasis on the emotional, in contrast to the dogmatic, side of religion, must have been present from the start in his pietistic upbringing" (H. L. Friess, *Schleiermacher's Soliloquies*, 1926, p. 127 *n.*).

[2] For estimates of his work cp. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrh.* p. 45; Kahnis, as last cited; Pfleiderer, *Development of Theology in Germany*, 1893, Bk. I, ch. iii; Bk. II, ch. ii; Lichtenberger, as cited; and art. by Rev. F. J. Smith in *Theol. Review*, July, 1869.

[3] Compare the sympathetic Introduction and Appendix to trans. of *Schleiermacher's Soliloquies*, by H. L. Friess, above cited—a careful and competent performance (Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago).

[4] Selbie, as cited, pp. 254–6.

rejection of it, and the honest religious attempt to reduce it to credibility; substituting, as "true religion," the blank intuitionism of auto-suggestion, common to the Shaman and the mystic of all ages. This is not properly to be termed a process of "thought" at all, being an evasion of the intellectual problem and a proclamation of bankruptcy of thought. The facile dismissal of the rationalist's problems as "arid" is fitly to be met by the reciprocal use of "empty," though more unpleasant epithets have been suggested. Schleiermacher's intuitionalism is as arid for the rationalist as is the scientific problem for the emotionalist.

The same self-complacent procedure is applicable to the habitual use of opium and cocaine; and the language in which professional theologians talk of their mystagogue as one who had found the "entrancing loveliness" of religion and "drunk deep of its ecstasy, and found in it life's most perfect bliss,"[1] at once reveals their reduction of religion to the level of drug-taking and their historical ignorance of the frequency of the procedure in the past. The same kind of conflict had taken place on a large scale in Scotland in the eighteenth century and in connection with Antinomian movements on the Continent in the Post-Reformation period. What is common to all such movements is the refusal, or the incapacity, to face the ultimate intellectual problem. Schleiermacher taught his followers to play with the concept of "feeling" as theologians to-day play with the term "values"—both devices for evading the rational test of truth; both oblivious of the fact that there is a feeling for truth as well as a feeling for feeling; and that sheer truth is for the truth-seeker the supreme "value." Of course the later procedure of auto-suggestion is subtler than the earlier.

This being so, Schleiermacher is "epoch-making" only in the sense that he professionally marks the beginning of the end of the reasoned defence of "revealed religion" in modern Europe, and the first systematic resort, in good literary form, to that intellectual antinomianism which is one of the recurring features of official religion at the present time. He may be also commemorated as one of the first moderns to set up,[2] as against the orthodox Christology, that asseveration of the supernormal "personality" of Jesus which is latterly become the refuge of the theologians who despair of otherwise proving his historicity. But this too is an influence on "thought" only in the way of making rhetoric do duty for argument, and so disguising the intellectual bankruptcy of faith. In particular,

[1] Dr. Peake, as cited, p. 142.

[2] In his treatise, *Der christliche Glaube nach der Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche*, 1821–1830–1. This schema is significantly disparaged by Ritschl, who in the next generation affected theological "thought" very much as Schleiermacher had done. It has not been translated into English, which is also significant.

his dependence for his impression on the historicity of the Fourth Gospel—the mark of the personal equation in so many latter-day "Christians"—reveals his relative lack of historico-critical judgment.

It is fair to Schleiermacher, however, to say that, apart from his prestidigitation over pantheism and immortality, he creates an impression of personal sincerity where many later theological performers arouse a sense of the presence of the Higher Charlatanism. He is also markedly their superior in point of literary power, being, in fact, more an artist seeking to impose his personality than a thinker seeking sheer truth. Inasmuch as he was largely a dissolvent of orthodoxy, he had his part in the progress of intellectual freedom, and is to be counted a reactionary only in respect of his temperamental incapacity for that entire intellectual submission to the law of truth which is the foil of the religious submission to emotional appetite, self-stultifyingly described as submission to Omnipotence.

Chapter III

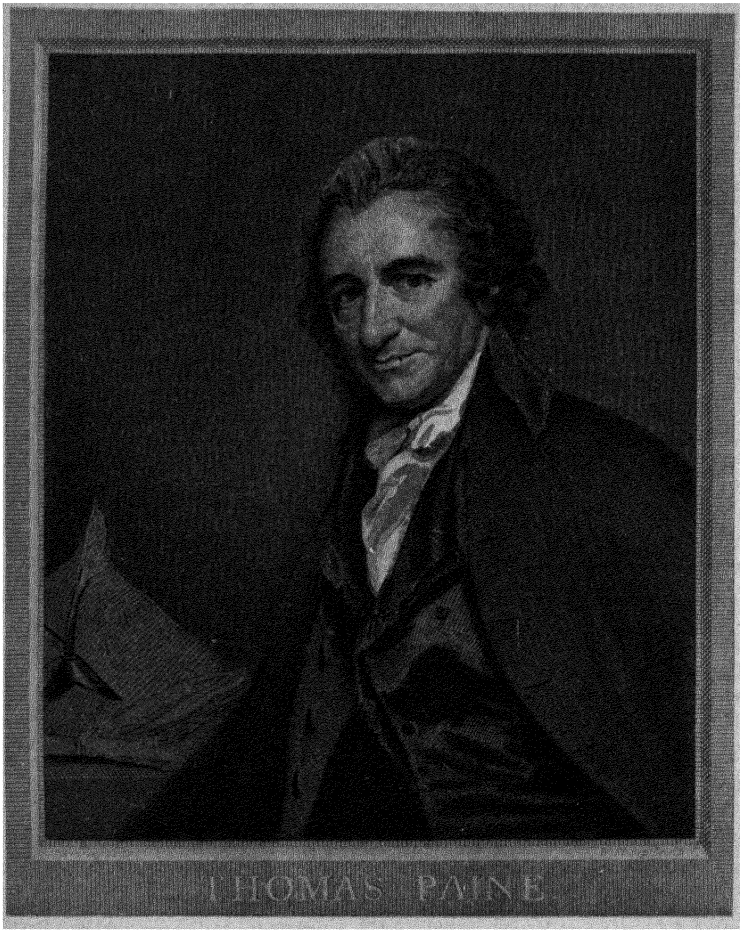
SOCIAL REACTION IN THE UNITED STATES

In a country which is to this day the most generally orthodox of the more progressive nationalities, it is difficult to predicate at any period a religious reaction ; but it was in the nature of things that the anti-revolutionary reaction in Europe should affect American thought, as the previous critical movement had done. And this took place, the "free" American clergy being then as now no less alert to their common interest than the State establishments of Europe.

1. Perhaps the most signal of all the proofs of the change wrought in the opinion of the civilized world in the eighteenth century is the fact that at the time of the War of Independence the leading statesmen of the American colonies were deists. Such were Benjamin Franklin, the diplomatist of the Revolution ; Thomas Paine, its prophet and inspirer ; Washington, its commander ; and Jefferson, its typical legislator. But for these four men the American Revolution could hardly have been accomplished in that age ; and they thus represent in a peculiar degree the power of new ideas, in fit conditions, to transform societies, at least politically. On the other hand, the fashion in which their relation to the creeds of their time has been garbled, alike in American and English histories, proves how completely they were in advance of the average thought of their day ; and also how effectively the mere institutional influence of creeds can arrest a nation's mental development. It is still one of the stock doctrines of religious sociology in England and America that deism, miscalled atheism, wrought the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution ; when as a matter of fact the same deism was at the head of affairs in the American.

2. The rise of rationalism in the colonies must be traced in the main to the imported English literature of the eighteenth century ; for the first Puritan settlements had contained at most only a fraction of freethought ; and the conditions, so deadly for all manner even of devout heresy, made avowed unbelief impossible. Virginia and the Carolinas were the more likely fields for the new English deism. The superstitions and cruelties of the Puritan clergy, however, must have bred a silent reaction, which prepared a soil for the deism of the next age.[1] "The perusal of

[1] John Wesley, in his Journal, dating May, 1737, speaks of having everywhere met many more "converts to infidelity" than "converts to Popery," with apparent reference to Carolina, where the anti-clericalism of the previous age, with the doctrine of Hobbes and the later deists, would find an aristocratic audience.



THOMAS PAINE

Shaftesbury and Collins," writes Franklin with reference to his early youth, "had made me a sceptic," after being "previously so as to many doctrines of Christianity."[1] This was in his seventeenth or eighteenth year, about 1720, so that the importation of deism had been prompt.[2] Throughout life he held to the same opinion, conforming sufficiently to keep on fair terms with his neighbours,[3] and avoiding anything like critical propaganda; though on challenge, in the last year of his life, he avowed his negatively deistic position.[4]

3. Similarly prudent was Jefferson, who, like Franklin and Paine, extolled the Gospel Jesus and his teachings, but rejected the notion of supernatural revelation.[5] In a letter written so late as 1822 to a Unitarian correspondent, while refusing to publish another of similar tone, on the score that he was too old for strife, he declared that he "should as soon undertake to bring the crazy skulls of Bedlam to sound understanding as to inculcate reason into that of an Athanasian."[6] His experience of the New England clergy is expressed in allusions to Connecticut as having been "the last retreat of monkish darkness, bigotry, and abhorrence of those advances of the mind which had carried the other States a century ahead of them"; and in congratulations with John Adams (who had written that "this would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it"), when "this den of the priesthood is at last broken up."[7] John Adams, whose letters with their "crowd of scepticisms" kept even Jefferson from sleep,[8] seems to have figured as a member of a Congregationalist church, while in reality a Unitarian.[9]

4. Still more prudent was Washington, who seems to have ranked habitually as a member of the Episcopal Church; but concerning whom Jefferson relates that, when the clergy, having noted his constant abstention from any public mention of the Christian religion, so penned an address to him on his withdrawal from the Presidency as almost to force him to some declaration, he answered every part of the address but that, which he entirely ignored. It is further noted that only in his valedictory

[1] Such is the wording of the passage in the *Autobiography* in the Edinburgh edition of 1803, p. 25, which follows the French translation of the original MS. In the edition of the *Autobiography and Letters* in the Minerva Library, edited by Mr. Bettany (1891, p. 11), which follows Mr. Bigelow's edition of 1879, it runs: "Being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine....."

[2] Only in 1784, however, appeared the first anti-Christian work published in America, Ethan Allen's *Reason the Only Oracle of Man.* As to its positions see Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 192–3, and the article by Alexander Kadison in the *R. P. A. Annual* of 1926, pp. 76–80. [3] *Autobiography*, Bettany's ed. pp. 56, 65, 74, 77, etc.

[4] Letter of March 9, 1790. *Id.* p. 636.

[5] Cp. J. T. Morse's *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 339–40.

[6] MS. cited by Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 310–11.

[7] *Memoirs of Jefferson*, 1829, iv, 300–1. The date is 1817. These and other passages exhibiting Jefferson's deism are cited in Rayner's *Sketches of the Life*, etc., *of Jefferson*, 1832, pp. 513–17. [8] *Memoirs of Jefferson*, iv, 331. [9] Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 310.

letter to the governors of the States, on resigning his commission, did he speak of the "benign influence of the Christian religion"[1]—the common tone of the American deists of that day. It is further established that Washington avoided the Communion in church.[2] For the rest, the broad fact that all mention of deity was excluded from the Constitution of the United States must be historically taken to signify a profound change in the convictions of the leading minds among the people as compared with the beliefs of their ancestors. At the same time, the fact that they as a rule dissembled their unbelief is a proof that, even where legal penalties do not attach to an avowal of serious heresy, there inheres in the menace of mere social ostracism a power sufficient to coerce the outward life of public and professional men of all grades, in a democratic community where faith maintains and is maintained by a competitive multitude of priests. With this force the freethought of our own age has to reckon, after Inquisitions and blasphemy laws have become obsolete.

5. Nothing in American culture-history more clearly proves the last proposition than the case of Thomas Paine, the virtual founder of modern democratic freethought in Great Britain and the States.[3] It does not appear that Paine openly professed any heresy while he lived in England, or in America before the French Revolution. Yet the first sentence of his *Age of Reason*, of which the first part was written shortly before his imprisonment, under sentence of death from the Robespierre Government, in Paris (1793), shows that he had long held pronounced deistic opinions.[4] They were probably matured in the States, where, as we have seen, such views were often privately held, though there, as Franklin is said to have jesuitically declared in his old age, by way of encouraging immigration, "Atheism is unknown; infidelity rare and secret, so that persons may live to a great age in this country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an atheist or an infidel."

Paine did an unequalled service to the American Revolution by his *Common Sense* and his series of pamphlets headed *The Crisis*; there is, in fact, little question that but for the intense stimulus thus given by him at critical moments the movement might have collapsed at an early stage. Yet he seems to have had no thought there and then of avowing his

[1] Extract from Jefferson's Journal under date February 1, 1800, in the *Memoirs*, iv, 512. Gouverneur Morris, whom Jefferson further cites as to Washington's unbelief, is not a very good witness; but the main fact cited is significant.

[2] Compare the testimony given by the Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Albany, in 1831, as cited by R. D. Owen in his *Discussion on the Authenticity of the Bible* with O. Bacheler (London ed. 1840, p. 231), with the replies on the other side (pp. 233–4). Washington's death-bed attitude was that of a deist. See all the available data for his supposed orthodoxy in Sparks' *Life of Washington*, 1852, app. iv.

[3] So far as is known, Paine was the first writer to use the expression "the Religion of Humanity." See Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 206. To Paine's influence, too, appears to be due the founding of the first American Anti-Slavery Society. *Id.* i, 51–2, 60, 80, etc.

[4] Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 205–7.

deism. It was in part for the express purpose of resisting the ever-strengthening attack of atheism in France on deism itself that he undertook to save it by repudiating the Judæo-Christian revelation; and it is not even certain that he would have issued the *Age of Reason* when it did appear,[1] had he not supposed he was going to his death when put under arrest, on which score he left the manuscript for publication.[2]

Its gradual effect was much greater in Britain,[3] where his *Rights of Man* had already won him a wide popularity in the teeth of the most furious reaction, than in America. There, to his profound chagrin, he found that his honest utterance of his heresy brought on him hatred, calumny, ostracism, and even personal and political molestation. In 1797 he had founded in Paris the little "Church of Theo-philanthropy," beginning his inaugural discourse with the words: "Religion has two principal enemies, Fanaticism and Infidelity, or that which is called atheism. The first requires to be combated by reason and morality; the other by natural philosophy."[4] These were his settled convictions; and he lived to find himself shunned and vilified, in the name of religion, in the country whose freedom he had so puissantly wrought to win.[5] The Quakers, his father's sect, refused him a burial-place. He has had sympathy and fair play, as a rule, only from the atheists whom he distrusted and opposed, or from thinkers who no longer hold by deism.

6. The orthodox reaction against him in the States was of course the natural result of his uncompromisingly aggressive tone.[6] That had

[1] See his Letter to Samuel Adams, Jan. 1, 1803.

[2] A letter of Franklin to some one who had shown him a freethinking manuscript, advising against its publication (Bettany's ed. p. 620), has been conjecturally connected with Paine, but was clearly not addressed to him. Franklin died in 1790, and Paine was out of America from 1787 onwards. But the letter is in every way inapplicable to the *Age of Reason*. The remark, "If men are so wicked *with* religion, what would they be *without* it?," could not be made to a devout deist like Paine.

[3] According to the speech of counsel and the charge of Lord Kenyon in the trial of Williams for selling the *Age of Reason* in 1797, the book had been "forgotten by everybody." Then the trial resuscitated it. [4] Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 254–5.

[5] See Dr. Conway's chapter, "The American Inquisition," vol. ii, ch. xvi; also pp. 361–2, 374, 379. The falsity of the ordinary charges against Paine's character is finally made clear by Dr. Conway, ch. xix, and pp. 371, 383, 419, 423. The chronically revived story of his death-bed remorse for his writings—long ago exposed (Conway, ii, 420)—is definitively discredited in the latest reiteration. That occurs in the *Life and Letters of Dr. R. H. Thomas* (1905), the mother of whose stepmother was the Mrs. Mary Hinsdale, née Roscoe, on whose testimony the legend rests. Dr. Thomas, a Quaker of the highest character, accepted the story without question, but incidentally tells of the old lady (p. 13) that "*her wandering fancies* had all the charm of a present fairy-tale to us." No further proof is needed, after the previous exposure, of the worthlessness of the testimony in question.

[6] Hazlitt, himself heterodox, not untruly observes of Paine (*Conversations of Northcote*, i) that, though "nobody can deny that he was a very fine writer and a very sensible man," he "flew in the face of a whole generation," and "did not care what offence he gave them." The judgment is peculiarly edifying as coming from Hazlitt, who in his own way did the same thing.

greatly pleased his compatriots when it was directed against the British Government. Turned upon their own beliefs, it was as repellent to them as to their British contemporaries. To neither did it occur to recall that this unsparing temper was exactly that of the Christian Fathers against pagan beliefs and lore, or to realize that it was essentially the tone of the religious man, offended by what he regarded as a superstition calculated to drive thinking men to atheism. Neither then nor now has this aspect of Paine's work been perceived by the religious world. His stringency of tone is in fact exactly paralleled by that of the Unitarian Priestley in the same period. In both cases the man of religious conviction attacks the convictions of others with the fervour of faith; though Paine, with his hearty humanity, lacks the element of fanaticism revealed by the other.

7. Priestley, who had gone to the States in 1794, after his own hard experience of intolerance at home, took up the cudgels against his fellow-victims, in his 'Answer to Mr. Paine's Age of Reason' (America, 1794; London, 1795). While persistently assailing as "corruptions" of Christianity the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, he stood as stedfastly by revelation and miracles; and his advocacy seems to have gone far to turn to bibliolatrous Unitarianism what of liberal thinking was then current in the States,[1] leaving Paine nearly destitute of backing. Priestley's 'Discourses relating to the Evidences of Revealed Religion' (Philadelphia and London, 1796) carry on the "Christian" polemic on Unitarian lines, and are dedicated to John Adams, then Vice-President of the United States.

He of course incurred orthodox hostility, and his 'Socrates and Jesus Compared' (Philadelphia, 1803) led to a polemic with a Presbyterian pastor, Linn, whose first letter to Priestley seems to have won him the degree of D.D., and who thereafter, with his adversary, became duly heated. Priestley at least exhibits a measure of critical breadth as against the unrelieved bigotry of his opponent. Dr. Linn exhibits American Presbyterianism as wholly untouched by the Unitarian leaning revealed by the sect in England in the previous century, when the young Priestley (1755) first broached his Unitarian doctrine as a Presbyterian minister. Paine probably viewed the contest of the Bible-religionists with some satisfaction, his own polemic having been first and last an insistence on the freeing of the human mind from bibliolatrous tradition. There is reason to think that in his last years the deistic optimism which survived the deep disappointments of the French Revolution began to give way before fuller reflection on the cosmic problem,[2] if not because of the treatment he had undergone at the hands of Unitarians and Trinitarians alike. The Butlerian argument, that Nature is as unsatisfactory as revelation, had been pressed upon him by Bishop Watson in reply to the *Age of Reason*; and though, like most deists of his age, he regarded it as a vain

[1] See the preface of Theophilus Lindsey to Priestley's *Answer*. [2] Conway, ii, 371.

defence of orthodoxy, he was not the man to remain long blind to its force against deistic assumptions. Like Franklin, he had energetically absorbed and given out the new ideals of physical science ; his originality in the invention of a tubular iron bridge, and in the application of steam to navigation,[1] being nearly as notable as that of Franklin's great discovery concerning electricity. Had the two men drawn their philosophy from the France of the latter part of the century instead of the England of the first, they had doubtless gone deeper. As it was, optimism had kept both satisfied with the transitional formula ; and in France before and after the Revolution they lived pre-occupied with politics.

8. The habit of reticence or dissimulation among American public men was only too surely confirmed by the treatment meted out to Paine. Few stood by him ; and the vigorous deistic movement set up in his latter years by Elihu Palmer soon succumbed to the conditions,[2] though Palmer's book, *The Principles of Nature* (1802, rep. by Richard Carlile, 1819), is a powerful attack on the Judaic and Christian systems all along the line. George Houston, leaving England after two years' imprisonment for his translation of d'Holbach's *Histoire de Jésus-Christ*, went to New York, where he edited the *Minerva* (1822), reprinted his book, and started a freethought journal, *The Correspondence*. That, however, lasted only eighteen months. All the while such statesmen as Madison and Monroe, the latter Paine's personal friend, seem to have been of his way of thinking,[3] though the evidence is scanty.

Thus it came about that, save for the liberal movement of the Hicksite Quakers,[4] the American deism of Paine's day was decorously transformed into the later Unitarianism, the rapid advance of which in the next generation is the best proof of the frequency of private unbelief among the more educated. They took the "line of least resistance." The influence of Priestley, in view of his scientific eminence, was powerful there as in England ; but it seems certain that the whole deistic movement, including the work of Paine and Palmer, had tended to move out of orthodoxy many of those who now, recoiling from the fierce hostility directed against the outspoken freethinkers, sought a more rational form of church-going creed than that of the orthodox churches. The deistic tradition in a manner centred in the name of Jefferson, and the known deism of that leader would do much to make fashionable a heresy which combined his views with a decorous attitude to the Sacred Books.

The common treatment of the memory of Paine in the United States, as distinguished from the loyalty of the few, is an unpleasant testimony to the possibilities of ingratitude and pious iniquity even in a democratic world. Paine bitterly charged ingratitude on

[1] See the details in Conway's *Life*, ii, 280–1, and *note*. He had also a scheme for a gunpowder motor (*id.* and i, 240), and various other remarkable plans.
[2] Conway, ii, 362–71. [3] Testimonies quoted by R. D. Owen, as cited, pp. 231–2.
[4] Conway, ii, 422.

Washington (see his Verses for a Bust of Washington), presumably for not standing by him against the ostracism to which he was latterly subjected. But Washington only conformed to American public opinion. A famous President of modern times, Theodore Roosevelt, has with much acceptance spoken of Paine as "a dirty little atheist"—this while extolling the memory of Gouverneur Morris, latterly proved to have been treacherous to the United States Government of his day.[1] The terse reply that the proposition is true save on three points—that Paine was not dirty, was not little, and was not an atheist—is not a very adequate comment on a public outrage which sufficiently reveals that American democracy is not immune from vulgar mendacity in high places.

So feeble is still the resistance to such orthodox outrage that in a recent history of 'The Rise of American Civilization,'[2] in which Paine's services to the cause of the American Revolution are clearly recognized, the comment on President Roosevelt's pronouncement is no stronger than this (i, 261): "Whatever may be said of Paine's shortcomings and his wayward spirit—Theodore Roosevelt, with characteristic *impatience* and a woeful disregard of *exactness*, called him 'a dirty little atheist'—Paine's services to the Revolution were beyond calculation. For this we have the evidence of men as far apart in their general views as Washington and Jefferson."

The implication appears to be that Paine's freethinking is now to be gently dismissed as the shortcoming of a "wayward" spirit, and the scurrility of Roosevelt as the "characteristic impatience" of a great man. Effete Europe witnesses the revelation of the popular American psychology with mixed emotions, resolvable into the reflection that in the New as in the Old World littleness of soul is not eliminated by large national achievement. Paine stands out all the more clearly for his element of greatness. A hundred years hence, perhaps, that may be generally realized by the American people.[3]

[1] See Moncure Conway's *Thomas Paine et la Révolution dans les deux Mondes, traduit de l'anglais* par Félix Barbe, 1890, *per Index.*

[2] By Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard; 2 vols. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927.)

[3] There are recent signs of appreciation, in non-rationalist quarters in England, of his merits as a writer, recognized in his own day by Hazlitt, but rarely by literary persons since. "I end as I began," writes the late Sir Edmund Gosse in an otherwise unenthusiastic review of Mrs. Mary Agnes Best's *Thomas Paine, Prophet and Martyr*, "by the candid admission that 'The Rights of Man' is a surprisingly well-written treatise" (*Sunday Times*, Oct. 23, 1927).

Chapter IV

FREETHINKING REACTION IN BRITAIN AND AMERICA

§ 1. *Popular Propaganda*

1. As we have seen in the survey of the religious reaction, the critical concern for revision of knowledge and doctrine of all kinds was at most intimidated, never expelled, among the more inquiring minds, even under the action of penal law. While books directly impugning the current creed were sought to be suppressed, and their publishers and vendors imprisoned, social and economic science, natural science, moral and other philosophy were subject to terrorism only so far as they seemed directly to clash with religion as by law established or with law and order. Men were thus reasoning more or less actively on some lines even when "the age of reason" was become a phrase of obloquy, connoting a banned theme. "Suppressed" literature, too, can notoriously acquire methods of diffusion; and in nineteenth as in eighteenth century history there is no decade in which clerical complaints of the "spread of infidelity," and attempts to dam it, do not abound.

These very attempts, as has been noted, constantly stimulated discussion. Apologists have to quote their infidels in order to refute them; and many a serious reader has been introduced to insoluble doubts by official rebuttals which missed their aim. It was thus only a question of time for the penetration of the orthodox atmosphere by new ideas on all planes where thought could thrive. In England, thanks to developed democratic usage, the penetration was more largely popular than elsewhere. In France and Italy and Spain the societies of Freemasonry had become or were becoming underground channels of freethought—a phenomenon not paralleled in England. But there the popular propagandists persisted in using the press; and it is hard to say how much the more scholarly enlightenment of the next age owes to those hardy pioneers.

2. The foremost name among them was that of Thomas (to this day commonly known to superior people only as "Tom" [1]) Paine, whom we have seen combining a gospel of democracy with a gospel of critical reason in the midst of the French Revolution. Never before had rationalism been made widely popular. The English and French deists

[1] There is a tradition that a kind of mat in that day was called a "Tom Paine." It suggests a corruption of "tompion," which to-day signifies among other things the inking-pad of a lithographic printer.

had written for the middle and upper classes. Peter Annet[1] was practically the first who sought to reach the multitude; and his punishment expressed the special resentment aroused in the governing classes by such a policy. Of all the English freethinkers of the earlier deistical period he alone was selected for reprinting by the propagandists of the Paine period. Paine was to Annet, however, as a cannon to a musket; and through the democratic ferment of his day he won an audience a hundredfold wider than Annet could have dreamt of reaching. That he was really a powerful writer is sufficiently proved by the very large sales of the many editions of his two chief works down to the present day; and that he had many readers in the middle and upper classes as well as among the people may be inferred not only from the fact that Pitt admitted his cogency but from the surprised confession of Carlyle that he found he agreed with him on *The Rights of Man*.[2]

Direct propaganda, further, was carried on by translations and reprints as well as by fresh English tractates. Diderot's *Thoughts on Religion* and Freret's *Letter from Thrasybulus to Leucippus* seem to have been great favourites among the Painites, as was Elihu Palmer's *Principles of Nature*; and Volney's *Ruins of Empires* had a large vogue. Condorcet's *Esquisse* had been promptly translated in 1795; the 1795 (4 vols.) translation of d'Holbach's *System of Nature* reached a third edition in 1817;[3] that of Raynal's History had been reprinted in 1804; and that of Helvétius *On the Mind* in 1810; while an English abridgment of Bayle in four volumes, on freethinking lines, appeared in 1826. And we have the testimony of an apologist of the time that, apart from such histories as those of Hume and Gibbon, and "many" of the same temper, "almost universally read," "rude and direct assaults upon Revelation" were "constantly issuing from the press," with the result that, though "real religion" flourished more than ever before, "yet it is certain that a vast number of persons reject it, either avowedly or virtually."[4]

3. Meantime new writers arose to carry into fuller detail the attacks of Paine, sharpening their weapons on those of the more scholarly French deists. A *Life of Jesus, including his Apocryphal History*,[5] was

[1] Whose *Free Inquirer* (1761) was reprinted by Richard Carlile.

[2] *William Allingham: A Diary*, 1907, p. 227.

[3] This translation, issued by "Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Paternoster Row, and all booksellers," purports to be "with additions." The translation, however, has altered d'Holbach's atheism to deism. Yet it purports to be printed by W. Hodgson, the translator of the first (and faithful) version, on the title-page of which he was described as "Now confined in Newgate for sedition, under a sentence of two years' imprisonment, a fine of £200, and securities for two years more in £400."

[4] Rev. J. B. Sumner, *The Evidence of Christianity, derived from its Nature and Reception*, 1824, pref. pp. iv–v.

[5] By W. Huttman. The book is "embellished with a head of Jesus"—a conventional religious picture. Huttman's opinions may be divined from the last sentence of his preface, alluding to "the high pretentions and inflated stile of the lives of Christ which issue periodically from the English press."

published in 1818, with such astute avoidance of all comment that it escaped prosecution. Others, taking a more daring course, fared accordingly. George Houston translated the *Histoire Critique de Jésus Christ*[1] of d'Holbach, first publishing it at Edinburgh in 1799, and reprinting it in London in 1813. For the second issue he was prosecuted, fined £200, and imprisoned for two years in Newgate. Robert Wedderburn, a mulatto calling himself "the Rev.," in reality a superannuated journeyman tailor who officiated in Hopkins Street Unitarian Chapel, London, was in 1820 sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Dorchester Jail for a "blasphemous libel" contained in one of his pulpit discourses. His Letters to the Rev. Solomon Herschell (the Jewish Chief Rabbi) and to the Archbishop of Canterbury show a happy vein of orderly irony and not a little learning, despite his profession of apostolic ignorance; and at the trial the judge admitted his defence to be "exceedingly well drawn up."

The explanation appears to be that the Letters were written, wholly or mainly, and the defence drawn up, by an abler hand, that of the Rev. Erasmus Perkins, author of "A Few Hints relative to the Texture of Mind and the Manufacture of Conscience, Published for the Benefit of the Rev. R. Wedderburn" during his imprisonment. Perkins, a cultured dissenting minister of large experience and liberal views, avows knowledge of estimable atheists, but professes himself a theist of the school of Helvétius.

> The identification may be made by comparing a note on p. 8 of the Letter to the Archbishop with p. 22 of Perkins' *Hints*. Perkins announced for publication a *Collectanea Sceptica*, beginning with reprints of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking* and Blount's *Oracles of Reason*, but this does not seem to have been carried out. Wedderburn, in prison, appears to have resorted to a more vernacular order of mockery, e.g., *A Shove for a Heavy-Breach'd Christian*—an echo from the past.[2]

4. As the years went on the persecution in England grew still fiercer; but it was met with a stubborn hardihood which wore out even the bitter malice of piety. One of the worst features of the religious crusade was that it affected to attack not unbelief but "vice," such being the plea on which Wilberforce and others prosecuted, during a period of more than twenty years, the publishers and booksellers who issued the works of Paine.[3] But even that dissembling device did not ultimately avail. A

[1] D'Holbach's book has the sub-title *Ecce Homo*, and this Houston put first. This *Ecce Homo* is not to be confounded with that of Saint-Martin, published in 1792. Saint-Martin was a mystic, a Behmenist, and a Catholic *pratiquant*. He avows in his correspondence that he wrote his book to combat the literalism of a lady disciple.

[2] Carlile, who had many feuds, alleged (*Republican*, vol. xiii, 1826, p. 604) that Erasmus Perkins was really "one George Common, the acquaintance of Houston and Eaton," and a "bad character." He does not write like one.

[3] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 184–5.

name not to be forgotten by those who value obscure service to human freedom is that of Richard Carlile, who between 1817 and 1835 underwent over nine years' imprisonment in his unyielding struggle for the freedom of the press, of thought, and of speech.[1]

His battle began in 1817, when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and Cobbett prudentially went to America to be out of the way of trouble. Carlile had regarded Cobbett's *Political Register* as "a mere milk-and-water paper compared with the *Black Dwarf* and some of the other newspapers," and he undertook-to and did sell these, until he was imprisoned for eighteen weeks for selling Hone's suppressed Parodies on the Prayer-Book. Then he became a publisher on his own account; and in January of 1819 Wilberforce's old 'Society for the Suppression of Vice' (which was now living largely by blackmail, making charges and withdrawing them on payment of "expenses") began an attack on him for republishing Paine's *Age of Reason*, on which charge he was prosecuted.

In point of fact, the publishing venture had not been very successful, only a hundred copies having been sold in a month. Immediately on the prosecution the second month's sales rose to nine hundred;[2] and Carlile at his trial insisted on reading the whole book in his speech of defence, so that the jury should know its contents. It was accordingly embodied in the report, which sold by thousands; and Carlile's edition, with the rest of his stock, went on selling at the same rate. Paine, who had somewhat passed out of notice, was now much more read than ever, as were the other reprinted "infidels." Meantime Carlile was sentenced to imprisonment for three years, and to pay a fine of £1,500. As he could not pay it, the three years extended to six. And in prison he went on editing his periodicals!

In the year 1819 he produced, besides the 'Theological, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Paine,' a long series of aggressive free-thinking tracts and books,[3] mostly bound up in a volume dedicated "To

[1] See Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*, ed. 1877, ii, 87, and Mrs. Carlile Campbell's *The Battle of the Press* (Bonner, 1899), passim, as to the treatment of those who acted as Carlile's shopmen. Carlile's wife and sister were imprisoned with him; and over twenty volunteer shopmen in all went to jail.

[2] *Freethinkers' Information for the People*, 1842, pp. 167–8.

[3] *The Doubts of Infidels, or, Queries relative to Scriptural Inconsistencies and Contradictions, submitted for elucidation to the Bench of Bishops, by a Weak but Sincere Christian* (24 pp.); *Watson Refuted*, by Dr. Samuel Francis (rep. of tract of 1796, 92 pp.); *Christian Mystery: A Chinese Tale, found in the Portfolio of a Portuguese Friar* (9 pp.); *Thoughts on the Christian Religion, by a Deist, To which are added A Few Ideas on Miraculous Conversion and Religion in General, by a Theophilanthropist* (29 pp.); *A Letter to Sir Samuel Shepherd, Knt., His Majesty's Attorney-General, upon the Subject of his Prosecutions of Richard Carlile*, etc., signed *Philalethes* (20 pp.); *A Letter to Mr. Carlile* [unsigned, in which the persecutors are reminded that "the means they are resorting to are those which so successfully promoted the cause of infidelity in France"]; *Principles of Nature*, by Elihu Palmer (206 pp.); *The God of the Jews*,

the Society, Self-Styled a Society for the Suppression of Vice,"[1] observing that it has begun a prosecution against Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, the longest treatise in the volume. All are produced in a more expensive style than the freethinking publishers ventured on in the 'forties; and it is to be inferred that this was made possible for Carlile by the generosity of Julian Hibbert, a scholarly freethinker of private means,[2] who on one occasion gave Carlile £1,000, on the spur of a similar gift to some political leader; and who is said to have assisted him, during the period to Hibbert's death in 1834, to the extent of £7,000.[3] In such circumstances it may be wondered why Carlile served his second term of three years in Dorchester Jail instead of paying his fine. He would indeed naturally loathe paying £1,500 to the persecuting authorities.

But there has been offered the sad solution that the staunch martyr, who had fought the judge at his trial with a bulldog persistence in "indecorum" which earned for that harassed official the sympathy of many of his fellow Christians,[4] preferred living in jail[5] to living with his first wife, who was his senior, and definitely uncompanionable. When all is said, however, it is to be remembered that if he came out of jail in 1822 he might have counted on being again prosecuted so long as he continued, as he was determined to do, his publication of freethinking books. In 1826 we find him publishing another series.

It did not require any personal utterance or authorship to incur such penalties. In 1820 Thomas Davison was tried for publishing, in *The Deist's Magazine*, 'A Defence of Deism, and Dissection of the Bible Story,'[6] and was sent to prison for two years, with a fine of £100. Shop assistants who sold freethinking books were all obnoxious to the law, and women were imprisoned as well as men. In 1823 Susanna Wright was put on trial "for having been instrumental in publishing a libel on the Christian religion," and, though described as having already "suffered in health from the imprisonment she had undergone," was sentenced to eighteen months' further incarceration, to pay a fine of £100, and to find sureties at the end of the term, under pain of a longer imprisonment. In making her defence she was constantly interrupted.

or Jehovah Unveiled, etc., *and Remarks on the Theocracy, to which is prefixed A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, by a Tradesman* (99 pp.); *Thoughts on the Inconsistency of Religious Persecutions, by J. W.* (16 pp.).

[1] Under the general title, *The Deist*, or *Moral Philosopher, being an Impartial Inquiry*, etc.

[2] He cannot have been as wealthy as Mrs. T. C. Campbell states. In the preface to his *Theophrastus*, etc., he tells that "the *res angusta domi* has obliged me to vow to buy no more books."

[3] *Life*, by Mrs. T. C. Campbell, p. 249.

[4] A report of one day's proceedings is printed as an Appendix to the *Life*.

[5] It is worthy of record that Francis Place thought Carlile in danger of being poisoned in jail, and wrote warning him to take precautions (*Life*, p. 244).

[6] *Freethinkers' Information*, vol. ii, p. 65. He was further charged with selling Carlile's *Republican*. The *Deist's Magazine* had an alternative title; *The Polemical Magazine and Philosophical Inquirer*,

In 1824 eight of Carlile's shopmen were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, with fines, for selling Paine's *Age of Reason* and three other irreligious works. One of them, John Clarke, an ex-Methodist, was tried for selling one of his employer's publications, and "after a spirited defence, in which he read many of the worst passages of the Bible," was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and to find securities for good behaviour during life. The latter disability he effectively anticipated by writing, while in prison, 'A Critical Review of the Life, Character, and Miracles of Jesus,' wherein, on the lines of Woolston and Annet, Christian feelings were treated as Christians had treated the feelings of free-thinkers, with a much more destructive result. Published first, strangely enough, in the *Newgate Magazine*, it was republished in 1825 and 1839, with impunity. Broadly speaking, the book is vitiated by animus, but that would not deprive it of influence in its environment.

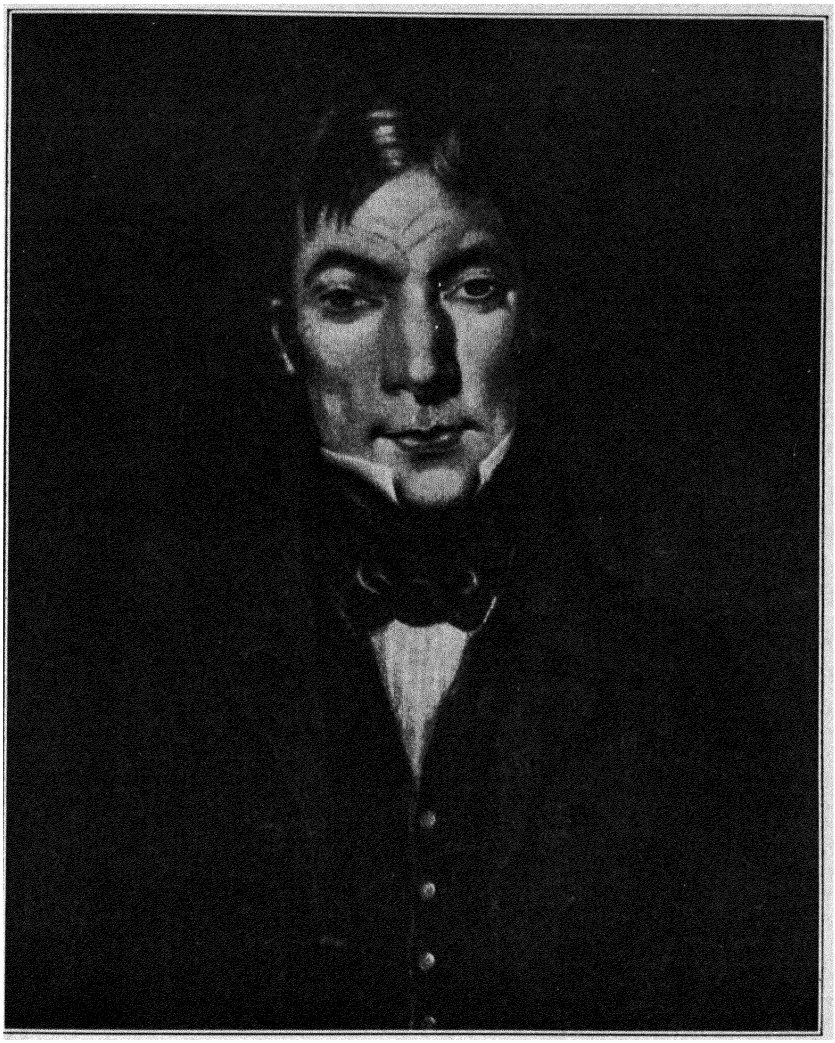
Thus did a brutal bigotry bring upon itself ever a deadlier retaliation, till it sickened of the contest. Those who threw up the struggle on the orthodox side declaimed as before about the tone of the unbeliever's attack, failing to read the plain lesson that, while noisy pious fanaticism, doing its own worst and vilest, deterred from utterance all the gentler and more sympathetic spirits on the side of reason, the work of reason could be done only by the harder natures, which gave back blow for blow and insult for insult, rejoicing in the encounter. Thus championed, free-thought could not be crushed. Lovers of freedom and fairplay among the well-to-do classes gave pecuniary support, as always happens in England in times of such struggle. The benevolent Julian Hibbert, besides giving Carlile his cheque for £1,000, spent nearly as much in refitting his shop in Fleet Street.[1] The propagandist and publishing work done by Carlile was carried on diversely by such freelances as Robert Taylor (ex-surgeon, ex-clergyman, B.A., author of the *Diegesis*, 1829, and *The Devil's Pulpit* 1830), and William Hone,[2] who ultimately became an independent preacher. Taylor (1784–1844), a more remarkable personality, underwent two terms of imprisonment for blasphemy—one year in 1828, in which he wrote his *Diegesis*—and two years in 1831–3. Thereafter a good marriage enabled him to retire from his labours and risks.

5. Of Taylor's *Diegesis* a not unfair account is given ten years later by a very different investigator, Charles C. Hennell, who had not read it before writing his own 'Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity' (1838).[3] To his sister Hennell writes (June, 1839):—

[1] Hibbert is to be remembered also as having printed at his private press, in uncial Greek, the Orphic Hymns and 'Plutarch and Theophrastus on Superstition.'

[2] Hone's most important service to popular culture was his issue of the *Apocryphal New Testament*, which, by co-ordinating work of the same kind, gave a fresh scientific basis to the popular criticism of the gospel history. As to his famous trial for blasphemy on the score of his having published certain parodies, political in intention, see Bk. I, ch. x (by Knight), of Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*.

[3] See below, ch. vi, § 5.



ROBERT OWEN

Facing Page 64

> I have nearly finished reading Robert Taylor's *Diegesis*, or, *Discovery* of the Origin, etc., of Christianity, which Charles [Bray] has sent me. It is not fair to call it uncandid, because there is no pretence at candour at all in it:—honest hating, reckless, witty, abusive, take-hold-of-anything special pleading. He gets the laugh on his side till you cry. Yet there is an immense deal of learning in it, and some valuable hints. It does not fall in much with mine, except about the Essenes: making out, and this is his grand discovery, that the *Therapeutæ*, Essenes of Egypt, had our gospel-story as part of their ancient writings *before* the supposed time of Christ. This rests on a comparison of a passage of Eusebius with one of Philo, which does not appear to me to prove it.
>
> But I must look a good deal into it, and say something about it in the next edition; also something about the Indian Chrishna, and how far it is probable that the evangelists have applied to Jesus the pagan fictions of Adonis, Bacchus, etc., or some corrupted versions of them. Like Dupuis, Taylor tries to make this out to the extent [of arguing] that no such real person ever existed; but.....both of them seem to have studied chiefly the books of pagan mythology, and to have almost neglected Josephus and the Old Testament, which have been part of my chief studies. This makes their books of quite a different character from mine. I am persuaded I am nearest the truth—but they suggest a great deal that I could add.[1]

This candid survey indicates the reasons why Taylor's abundant but ill co-ordinated learning and methodless discursiveness failed to make him more than a provoking portent in his day. His treatment of the Myth Theory lacks the systematic force of Dupuis; and, though he had a follower in Logan Mitchell,[2] he set up no critical movement. *The Devil's Pulpit*, which, like the *Diegesis*, was long reprinted, had similar merits and demerits, serving popular freethought in the same fashion.

6. The most extensive influence for freethought in that age, apart from Paine, was the new social crusade of Robert Owen (1771–1858), whose teaching, largely scientific on its psychological or philosophical side, was the first effort to give systematic effect to democratic ideals by organizing industry. It was in the discussions of the "Association of all Classes of all Nations," formed by Owen in 1835, that the word "Socialism" first became current.[3] Owen, though by cast of mind always oracular rather than inquiring, doctrinaire rather than judicial, was a freethinker in all things;[4] and his whole movement was so penetrated by an anti-theological spirit that the clergy as a rule became its bitter enemies, though such publicists as Macaulay and John Mill also combined with them in scouting it on political and economic grounds.[5]

[1] *A Memoir of Charles Christian Hennell*, by Sara S. Hennell, 1899, pp. 71–2.

[2] *Christian Mythology Unveiled*, rep. 1881.

[3] Kirkup, *History of Socialism*, 1892, p. 64.

[4] "From an early age he had lost all belief in the prevailing forms of religion" (Kirkup, p. 59).

[5] Reformers of almost all other schools, indeed, from the first regarded Owen with more or less genial incredulity, some criticizing him acutely without any ill-will. See Podmore's *Robert Owen*, 1906, i, 238–42. Southey was one of the first to detect his lack of religious belief. *Id.* p. 222, *n.*

Up till the middle of 1817 he had on his side a large body of "respectable" and highly-placed philanthropists, his notable success in his own social and commercial undertakings being his main recommendation. His early 'Essays on the Formation of Character,' indeed, were sufficient to reveal his heterodoxy; but not until, at his memorable public meeting on August 21, 1817, he began to expatiate on "the gross errors that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion that has hitherto been taught to men"[1] did he rank as an aggressive freethinker. It was in his own view the turning-point of his life. He was not prosecuted; though Brougham declared that if any politician had said half as much he would have been "burned alive"; but the alienation of "moderate" opinion at once began; and Owen, always more fervid than prudent, never recovered his influence among the upper classes. Nonetheless, "his secularistic teaching gained such influence among the working classes as to give occasion for the statement in the *Westminster Review* (1839) that his principles were the actual creed of a great portion of them."[2]

Owen's polemic method—if it could properly be so called—was not so much a criticism of dogma as a calm impeachment of religion in a spirit of philanthropy. No reformer was ever more entirely free from the spirit of wrath: on this side Owen towers above comparison. He had in fact the absolute self-confidence which casteth out anger, and played the prophet without prophetic fury. "There is no place found in him for scorn or indignation. He cannot bring himself to speak or think evil of any man. He carried out in his daily life his own teaching that man is not the proper object of praise or blame. Throughout his numerous works there is hardly a sentence of indignation—of personal denunciation never. He loves the sinner, and can hardly bring himself to hate the sin."[3] He had come by his rationalism through the influence rather of Rousseau than of Voltaire; and he had assimilated the philosophic doctrine of determinism—of all ideals the most difficult to realize completely in conduct—with a thoroughness of which the flawed Rousseau was incapable. There was thus presented to the world the curious case of a man who on the side of character carried rationalism to the perfection of ideal "saintliness," while in the general application of rational thought to concrete problems he was virtually unteachable. For an absolute and immovable conviction in his own practical rightness was in Owen as essential a constituent as his absolute benevolence.[4] These were the two poles of his personality. He was, in short, a fair embodi-

[1] Podmore, i, 246. This suggests intercourse with Godwin, whose posthumous essays often strike that note; and Owen was a visitor at Godwin's house.

[2] Kirkup, as cited, p. 64.

[3] Podmore, ii, 640.

[4] "Extraordinary self-complacency," "autocratic action," "arrogance," are among the expressions used of him by his ablest biographer. (Podmore, ii, 641.) Of him might be said, as of Emerson by himself, "the children of the Gods do not argue"—the faculty being absent.

ment of the ideal formed by many people—doctrine and dogma apart—of the Gospel Jesus. And most Christians accordingly shunned and feared or hated him.

His heterodoxy in religion was first broadly proclaimed during his first visit to America, when he challenged the clergy in general to debate with him on five theses to the effect that *all* religions had been founded in ignorance, were opposed to the laws of nature, are the main causes of vice, strife, and misery, and the chief bar to good life; and are maintained only through the ignorance of the many and the tyranny of the few. The debate came off at Cincinnati in 1829, after he had taken his leave of New Harmony, his opponent being a Universalist clergyman—Alexander Campbell, from Virginia. It lasted over eight days, on forenoons and afternoons; and it was declared by Owen to be "the first public discussion the world has ever permitted, with any degree of fairness, to take place between the orthodox faith of any country and a well-known, open, and decided opponent."[1]

Ostensibly the Universalist should have defended all religions alike, Owen assailing them; but Owen proceeded amiably to propound his own views of human nature, as later developed by him in England, and to show, as was not difficult, that no religion coincided with them. The positive guilt of those defective systems emerged chiefly by way of rejoinder to the claims made for Christianity by the Universalist. Mrs. Frances Trollope, who was present, justly pronounced that neither answered the other, but she found Owen extraordinarily winning in his polemic.[2] That the Universalist was a man of some natural faculty for reasoning is shown by several neat exposures of self-contradiction in Owen's theories; but his defence of religion betrays the usual mental injury from theological training, bordering as it does at times on burlesque.

He proves, for example, the historicity of the Crossing of the Red Sea by claiming (*a*) the assent of the court of Pharaoh, "which was crowded with the greatest statesmen and scholars that then existed," and (*b*) that the continuous existence of the Jewish nation is a "commemorative institution" attesting "those facts."[3] Again, in reply to Owen's argument that belief does not depend on volition, he reasoned (after putting a quite effective point against Owen's system) that when men seek evidence on which to ground a belief, as in a murder case, their belief "depends" on their volition to investigate.[4]

As to Christianity, about which the audience were presumably most concerned, Owen protested that if it consisted in believing that Christ is the Son of God; that he came down from heaven to save sinners, or the elect; that he was crucified, rose, and ascended to heaven, and is now interceding for us there—why, then "I should feel ashamed seriously to

[1] Report, London ed., 1839, p. 460.
[2] Podmore, i, 344–5.
[3] Report, as cited, p. 170.
[4] *Id.* p. 441.

attempt any opposition to such monstrous absurdities—such a ridiculous incongruity."[1] He had expected his opponent to deal with moral principles and social problems. Nevertheless, when the opponent denounced Owen's theory of the pre-determination of human character as destructive of human responsibility, and Owen referred him back to the revealed truth that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart," some of the audience must have had heart-searchings of their own. The visible benevolence of the heretic was always his best introduction.

Such a personality was evidently a formidable force as against the reinforced English orthodoxy of the first generation of the nineteenth century. The nature of Owen's propaganda in regard to religion may be best sampled from his lecture, '*The New Religion:* or, Religion founded on the Immutable Laws of the Universe, contrasted with all Religions founded on Human Testimony,' delivered at the London Tavern on October 20, 1830[2]:—

> Under the arrangements which have hitherto existed for educating and governing man, four general characters have been produced among the human race. These four characters appear to be formed, under the past and present arrangements of society, from four different original organizations at birth.....
>
> No. 1. May be termed the conscientious religious in all countries.
>
> No. 2. Unbelievers in the truth of any religion, but who strenuously support the religion of their country, under the conviction that, although religion is not necessary to insure their own good conduct, it is eminently required to compel others to act right.
>
> No. 3. Unbelievers who openly avow their disbelief in the truth of any religion, such as Deists, Atheists, Sceptics, etc., etc., but who do not perceive the laws of nature relative to man as an individual, or when united in a social state.
>
> No. 4. Disbelievers in all past and present religions, but believers in the eternal unchanging laws of the universe, as developed by facts derived from all past experience; and who, by a careful study of these facts, deduce from them the religion of nature.
>
> Class No. 1 is formed, under certain circumstances, from those original organizations which possess at birth strong moral and weak intellectual faculties.....Class No. 2 is composed of those individuals who by nature possess a smaller quantity of moral and a larger quantity of intellectual faculty.....Class No. 3 is composed of men of strong moral and moderate intellectual faculty.....Class No. 4 comprises those who, by nature, possess a high degree of intellectual and moral faculty.....

Thus all forms of opinion were shown to proceed either from intellectual or moral defect, save the opinions of Owen. Such propositions, tranquilly elaborated, were probably as effective in producing irritation as any frontal attack upon any dogmas, narratives, or polities. But, though not even consistent (inasmuch as the fundamental thesis that "character is formed by circumstances" is undermined by the datum of

[1] *Id.* p. 178. [2] Pamphlet sold at 1½d., and "to be had of all the Booksellers."

four varieties of organization), they were potent to influence serious men otherwise broadly instructed as to the nature of religious history and the irrationality of dogma ; and Owen for a generation, despite the inevitable failure and frustration of his social cshemes, exercised by his movement a very wide influence on popular life.

On the freethought side, however, its progression was not fortunate. As he proceeded, Owen developed vaguely theistic views, approximating to a latter-day pantheistic theism[1] with a fantastic side on which electricity appears to be contemplated as an expression or instrument of the Omnipresent Spirit.[2] At the same period, debating with the most offensive of the anti-Socialist lecturers employed by the clerical organizers of the "holy war" against his movement, he allowed himself to be manœuvred into declaring that "the religion of the New Moral World [i.e. his] is entirely in accordance with the doctrine of the Old and New Testament."[3]

This tactic partly alienated from him one of his freethinking "missionaries," George Jacob Holyoake, who had already protested against the procedure by which two others of the missionaries, Robert Buchanan[4] and Lloyd Jones, actually declared themselves "Missionaries of the Protestant Dissenters commonly called Rational Religionists," making the declaration provided by the Act of 19 George III for the relief of Dissenting Ministers, professing a belief in future rewards and punishments, subscribing the oaths, and taking the title of Reverend.[5] This strategy may be described as in a manner forced on the Owenites by the increasingly malignant clerical propaganda against them, which gave rise to much physical violence and made it almost impossible for them to get a hearing. But it compromised them in the eyes of many, at a time when scandals against some of their leading men were doing damage in other ways.

Owen serenely went on his erratic way, failing inevitably in his schemes, notably in that of Queenwood as in the experiment in America, and finally (1858) becoming a spiritualist of the then rising school of table-rapping. By this time what was left of Owenism had dissolved into separate movements, notably the Rochdale Co-operative Pioneers, while the freethinking element as such had been largely merged in the Secular Society, founded in 1852. Holyoake, however, remained closely associated with both.

7. To a considerable extent, Owen's movement had been furthered by the popular deistic philosophy of George Combe—a kind of theistic

[1] Podmore, ii, 494–6.

[2] *The Oracle of Reason*, vol. ii, p. 211 (June 11, 1843). An "electric theory of the universe" was current at the time.

[3] *Id.* vol. i, p. 147 (April 23, 1842).

[4] This writer, father of the poet of the same name, was certainly a freethinker. In 1839 and 1840 he published tractates on *The Religion of the Past and Present*, *The Origin and Nature of Ghosts*, and *A Concise History of Modern Priestcraft*. He had been fined for refusing to take the oath of supremacy.

[5] Podmore, ii, 526.

positivism, which then had great vogue.[1] "That memorable book," writes Morley of *The Constitution of Man* (1828), "whose principles have now in some shape or other become the accepted commonplaces of all rational persons, was a startling revelation when it was first published."[2] Morley seems to forget, in this connection, that Combe's book is avowedly inspired by Spurzheim, and proceeds from first to last on a ground of phrenology, which Morley elsewhere treats as obsolete error. It was, however, so confidently theistic that its rationalizing tendencies, shocking as they were even to some Christian phrenologists, did not avail to bring it under ostracism.

The fortunes of Combe's treatise reveal the forces at work. Its theism belongs to the main current of eighteenth-century rationalism as well as to the inherited habit of religion. Almost all of the Englishmen who in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century were to break away from Christian supernaturalism—Richard Carlile, the Owens, Godfrey Higgins, the Combes, Hennell, Froude, Francis Newman, Greg, and Baden Powell —took for granted that in their traditionary theism they had a spontaneous and irreducible intuition ; and that atheism, however logically put as a simple and necessary dismissal of a theism that visibly collapsed in self-contradiction, was something outrageous, dangerous, offensive to the moral instincts, and therefore to be carefully repudiated by freethinkers as such. Hennell alone discarded the tone of moral superiority. The very translation of d'Holbach's 'System of Nature,' as we have seen, had been deliberately mangled to make it a deistic treatise.

To the end of the century we find even Positivists, such as Frederic Harrison, confusedly deprecating the atheistic position ; and George Eliot, who was one of the first to accept it from Feuerbach, significantly spent her private enthusiasm on Comtism. Thus the freethinking movement was on one main ground, as regarded its literary expression, at one with the quasi-philosophic defence of religion, which has all along laboured to vindicate a theism that confessedly fell between the two stools of the law of intellectual consistency and the "need" for the affirmation of a benevolent Father in Heaven. Combe never faced the problems of the position at all, dying as he did before they were forced on general notice.

The progressive factor was the criticism which persistently wrought to clear away the supernaturalism of the Christian tradition. Combe sought to do his part in a philosophic fashion by presenting the concept of a Deity who wrought solely by law, "beneficently" coercing his creatures by putting them in circumstances in which they had to learn common sense

[1] Of George Combe's *Constitution of Man* (1828) over 50,000 copies were sold in Britain within twelve years, and 10,000 in America. Advt. to 4th ed. 1839. And in 1849 the total issue stood at 84,500—the result of sales at low prices. Combe avows that his impulse came from the phrenologist Spurzheim. Morley writes that "it was seen on shelves where there was nothing else save the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress."

[2] *Life of Cobden*, 1881.

or perish. As to the beneficence of such a plan of education by death-penalty, applied to fore-planned defectives, he seems to have had no misgiving. As it was, the Christian clerics and others among his first phrenological converts in Scotland were moved in the usual way to "bewilderment, horror, and indignation" by the opening essays in the *Constitution of Man*. They appealed to him to "suppress the whole series as subversive of Christianity and *false to phrenology*," though, on the other hand, some "believed that it afforded strong testimony to the truth of Christianity."[1]

The trouble was that Combe could see no value in dogmatic or didactic religion as a controller of conduct, and found the belief in immortality rather demoralizing than otherwise.[2] The natural upshot was a sheering away from phrenology on the part of the pious who had supposed the new science to be merely an edifying way of detecting their own gifts and merits, and the deficiencies of other people. On the other hand, Combe like Owen conveyed to the peoples of Britain and America a new impulse of partial rationalism, comparable to the equally elementary though scholarly rationalism which in Germany had enabled so many persons to disbelieve in miracles while adhering to the narratives that embodied them, and the priestly system which they subserved.

8. "Destructive" criticism, meanwhile, was proceeding on parallel lines. Robert Dale Owen, who had become an American citizen, had in 1831 conducted—apparently in a New York journal—two written debates with a Christian, not readily recognizable as a gentleman, named Origen Bacheler. The themes were 'The Existence of God' and 'The Authenticity of the Bible.' Dale Owen was an incomparably better debater than his father, had been much better educated, and was well abreast of the scholarship of the day. Like his father, he always debates like a gentleman, but there is never any slackness in his steady rebuttal of the crude orthodox bombardment of his rude antagonist. Published in book form for American and English readers, it had for many years the effective circulation which debates often receive, and must have been an influential instrument of propaganda, at least in England.

> No Christian organization would to-day care or dare to reprint these debates in the interests of faith, so obsolete is the orthodoxy of the blatant Bacheler; but American freethinkers might do worse than to revive them, after a century, for a democracy rather better prepared to appreciate them, and perhaps still considerably in need of critical instruction such as the letters of Dale Owen can give. The fact that, like his father's, his idealizing mind finally sought refuge from an inclement world in the dreams of spiritualism would perhaps not greatly disadvantage him; as there is no impairing mysticism in his work of 1831. His criticism of the design argument is notably

[1] *Life of George Combe*, by Charles Gibbon, 1878, i, 181, 184, 185. [2] *Id.* pp. 180, 182.

effective. He had likewise closely studied the question of Christian origins, and remarks concerning the existence of Moses and Jesus: "I have never denied either; but I confess I am surprised to find the evidence so scanty." (Debate cited, ninth letter to Bacheler. Eng. ed. 1840, p. 149.)

It is interesting to note that already in the States they were debating over the orthodoxy of Washington; and that the *New York Spectator* of 1831 avowed "a decided opinion, after close observation," that the Owenite *Free Inquirer* had done more in "scattering the seeds of infidelity" than "all those great engines of moral power under the control of our public societies have accomplished of good." "I think," comments Dale Owen, "our contemporary exaggerates the matter" (*id.* p. 160, *note*).

In point of fact, apart from Unitarianism, there was little stir of criticism in the less democratic regions of American life. Of the historian Prescott we read that in 1819, at the age of twenty-three, he carefully reviewed the general question of Christian Evidences, coming to a conclusion "in favour." Again, in 1829, he reopened the inquiry, reading Watson, Brown, Waterland, Butler, Paley, and Lardner, and chiefly valuing the last three. This time, while holding to the belief in miracles, he "did not find in the Gospels, or in any part of the New Testament, the doctrines commonly accounted orthodox, and he deliberately recorded his rejection of them," with a resolution to "avoid all habits of levity on religious topics" (Ticknor's *Life of W. H. Prescott*, 2nd ed. 1863, pp. 86–7).

Yet again, in 1837, he reopened the inquiry, reading not Strauss (he did not read German) but Marsh and the orthodox Unitarian Norton, Furness, Newcome, Paley, Middleton, and Gibbon. This time he made shorter work of "the orthodox doctrines" (still not specified), being "more and more satisfied that they were unfounded." Still avowedly conscious of "doubts," he settled down into an emotional Christianity, and died (1859) a Congregationalist (*id.* pp. 154–5, 415). He thus exhibits in epitome the slow response of critical intelligence, in his day and environment, to the pressures of new thought.

His excellent friend and biographer, George Ticknor—who was always absorbed in *belles lettres*, and who in 1816 wrote of Kant as having inflicted "barrenness" on the generation of Goethe and "absorbed and perverted all the talents of the land"—naturally exhibits the process in a still less degree. Brought up in Calvinist orthodoxy, he became, on his return from Europe, a Channingite Unitarian, and remained in that orthodoxy (Hillard's *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor*, 2nd ed. 1876, i, 74, 271).

The average level of American religious opinion in the period may be gathered from the fact that in 1837 George William Brown, of

Rockford, Illinois, was expelled from the Baptist Church of his parents, at the age of seventeen, for rejecting the dogma of an eternal hell. Brown, who became a doctor and edited the *Herald of Freedom*, had his office destroyed by a pro-slavery mob in 1856, and his type thrown into the river. He and others were arrested, but not tried.

9. Like the Churches, the English freethinking movements had their imperfectly white sheep. Charles Southwell, an unbalanced and unstable young man, who had been a soldier and actor[1] and had a gift for quarrelling, broke with the Owenites, and established the first avowedly atheistic English periodical, *The Oracle of Reason* (1842–3). In its fourth number he inserted an article which he entitled "The Jew Book," and which, as he afterwards declared, he made as offensive as he possibly could. He was duly prosecuted, fined £100, and imprisoned for a year. Thereupon the young George Jacob Holyoake (1817–1906) stepped into the breach. First led to deistic rationalism by Combe, Holyoake had been a mathematical master in the Mechanics' Institution of Birmingham, leaving that post in 1840 to become an Owenite "social missionary." He "had still a vague belief in God at the end of 1841";[2] but the imprisonment of Southwell moved him to cast it off, and for some years he described himself as an atheist, remaining mentally at that position, in fact, to the end of his life.

When he in turn was imprisoned for six months on the trivial charge of a blasphemy[3] in a discussion after a Socialist lecture,[4] a third editor, Thomas Paterson, a Scot, was imprisoned for using "blasphemous" placards in London. A fourth editor, George Adams, was then imprisoned for one month for selling a copy of the paper. Thereafter it was edited by a fifth, William Chilton, a working compositor, who contributed many capable articles on biology; until at the end of 1843 Holyoake superseded it by a new journal, *The Movement*, which was political as well as "anti-theological."

It bore the motto, from Bentham, "Maximize morals; minimize religion," and on those lines Holyoake proceeded in his career as lecturer and as publicist. His special gifts of phrase and style, which were the more carefully cultivated because of lack of the physical power and presence special to the orator, made him a force for freethought during the next generation. And the special anti-theological direction given to

[1] The most memorable biographic item about Southwell is that he was the youngest of a family of thirty-three children. He had some education, and translated a chapter of the Abrégé of Dupuis's *Origine de tous les Cultes*.

[2] *Life and Letters of G. J. Holyoake*, by J. McCabe, 1908, i, 56.

[3] Witty enough to have disarmed all save bigots. The reigning deity, considered as manager of human affairs, was indicated as fitly to be placed "on half pay."

[4] Details in his *Last Trial by Jury for Atheism in England*; also in *The Oracle of Reason*.

the bulk of his literary and lecturing work can be seen to have been determined by the revived policy of persecution in his youth. As he has recorded, his was "The Last Trial for Atheism in England"; and it cost orthodoxy too dear to admit of another.

This renewed activity of persecution evidently connects with the clerical crusade against Owenite Socialism. The English prosecutions for blasphemy were followed by a number in Edinburgh in 1843, the result being the formation of a number of Anti-Persecution Societies in both countries. As a result of that agitation, and perhaps of the lowering of the key of aggression in the later freethinking journals, legal persecution was in the main abandoned. When the Bishop of Exeter had sought to push the Melbourne Government into repressive action against Owen in 1840 official peers indicated to him that the policy of persecution was likely to defeat itself;[1] and the provincial crusade seems to have been only clerically incited.

The existence, further, of a "Philalethean Society, or Society for Peaceably Repressing Infidelity,"[2] points to a certain sense of shame on the Christian side at its perpetual association with brutality—if not any deepening of orthodox intelligence. Holyoake's most effective stroke was the production (1843) of a work entitled 'Paley Refuted in his Own Words,'[3] wherein it is pointed out that the Paleyan argument proves the existence not of one God only but of an infinity of Gods; and that the design argument further clearly involved the inference that the designer had been himself designed. It would have been awkward to deal with such propositions in the Police Court. Southwell afterwards broke with atheists on the score that there was no sense in taking a title from the negation of a hallucination; quarrelled with Holyoake on that ground; published an unpleasant autobiography[4] without a publisher's name; emigrated to New Zealand; worked there on a Methodist journal, and on his death-bed informed his employers that he was still an atheist.

Apart from him, the *Oracle* pursued a logical course of confuting theism, and leaving "a-theism" the negative result. It did not, in the absurd terms of common religious propaganda, "deny *the* existence of God." It affirmed that God was a term for an existence imagined by man in terms of his own personality and irreducible to any tenable definition. It did not even affirm that "there are no Gods"; it insisted that the onus of proof as to any God lay with the theist,[5] who could give none compatible with his definitions. It was thus a clear popular state-

[1] Podmore, ii, 504–10. [2] *Id.* p. 504.

[3] I rate this somewhat higher than Mr. McCabe does (*Life of Holyoake*, i, 95–6). Its chief defect is dilatoriness and lack of arrangement (cp. *Life*, ii, 279); but it is sufficiently damaging to the design argument.

[4] Compare Mr. McCabe's *Life of Holyoake*, i, 58.

[5] *Oracle of Reason*, i, 290, and *passim*, in that series of articles on "Is there a God?"

ment, backed by wide reading, of the position which had just before been taken up by Feuerbach in Germany.

Such propaganda was distasteful to many freethinkers of the time who held by deism, as did so many of the new critics of the gospels. Richard Carlile had always been a deist, and, now near his end and lapsing into a kind of theistic mysticism which made abstractions of the Trinity, refused his blessing.[1] On his death in 1843 the old fighter's corpse was subjected to the Anglican burial service in despite of the earnest protests of his sons. Hitherto the clerical practice had been to *refuse* burial in church ground to professed unbelievers. The principle of action had now come to be that of choosing whichever course would be most annoying to the enemy.[2]

10. Alongside of the *Oracle of Reason* there ran for two years a much more judiciously conducted and more widely educative (though equally small) periodical, 'The Freethinker's Information for the People,' published by Hetherington, which contains more solid and scholarly matter than is to be found in any volume of the decade. Besides geological criticisms of Genesis, analyses of Christian Evidences, and of the argument from miracles and prophecies, it includes a notably learned history of 'The Struggles of Philosophy with Superstition and Priestcraft' in ancient and modern times, and a remarkably effective reproduction of the gist of Hennell's 'Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity' (1838), thus placing its readers abreast of the rationalist scholarship of the time. A further series of articles on 'The World's Pantheon' drew upon the 'Asiatic Researches' and other compilations for a discursive account of Hindu theology and myth, in particular the myth of Krishna. Its readers were better prepared for a sound judgment on the claims of Christianity than were the contemporary clergy and the youth of Oxford, exercised by the Tractarian movement.

11. In this evolution political activities generally played an important part. Henry Hetherington (1792–1849), the strenuous democrat who in 1830 began the trade union movement and so became the founder of Chartism, fought for the right of publication in matters of freethought as in politics. After undergoing two imprisonments of six months each (1832), and carrying on for three and a half years the struggle for an untaxed press, which ended in his victory (1834), he was in 1840 indicted for publishing *Haslam's Letters to the Clergy of all Denominations*, a freethinking criticism of Old Testament morality. He defended himself so ably that Lord Denman, the judge, confessed to have "listened with feelings of great interest and sentiments of respect too"; and Justice Talfourd later spoke of the defence as marked by "great propriety and talent." Nevertheless, he was punished by four months' imprisonment.[3]

[1] *Oracle of Reason*, i, 315, 337. [2] *Id.* ii, 111.
[3] Art. by Holyoake in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* Cp. *Sixty Years*, per index.

In the following year, on the advice of Francis Place, he brought a test prosecution for blasphemy against Moxon, the poet-publisher, for issuing Shelley's complete works, including *Queen Mab*. Talfourd, then Serjeant, defended Moxon, and pleaded that there "must be some alteration of the law, or some restriction of the right to put it in action"; but the jury were impartial enough to find the publisher guilty, though he received no punishment.[1] Among other works published by Hetherington (they included Holyoake's *Paley Refuted*) was one entitled *A Hunt after the Devil*, "by Dr. P. Y." (really by Lieutenant Lecount), in which the story of Noah's ark was subjected to a destructive criticism;[2] and 'The Existence of Christ Disproved by irresistible Evidence, in a series of Letters, by a German Jew' (1841)[3]—a work never reprinted.

12. A new feature of the aggressive and defensive propaganda was the participation of women. This, already noted in the struggle led by Richard Carlile, recurred in connection with the prosecutions of the 'forties, when Matilda Roalfe underwent imprisonment. Miss Roalfe went from London to Edinburgh to share in the fight, opened a shop, and put forth a manifesto announcing that she would sell books which seemed to her useful "whether they did or did not bring into contempt the Holy Scriptures and the Christian Religion." On being prosecuted she declared that she would continue her action when liberated; and after enduring two months' imprisonment in 1844 she actually did so.[4]

Another combatant of that decade, Mrs. Emma Martin (1812–51), was a gifted young woman of literary tastes and training, who in her orthodox youth had edited *The Bristol Magazine*. At that stage she had affirmed that "Infidelity is the effusion of weak minds and the resource of guilty ones." From that certitude she was dislodged by the arguments of Charles Southwell; but could claim that she "became an infidel after twelve years' study and practice of Christian principles, seriously investigating all the internal and external evidences." Very unhappily married, she at length had to maintain her own children, and formed a short-lived free union. With her freethought she combined an Owenite propaganda, and she was described by Holyoake as "the most womanly woman of all the public advocates of 'Woman's Rights.'" She wrote a now forgotten novel, *The Exiles of Piedmont*, and translated from the Italian the 'Maxims' of Guicciardini. Among her own propagandist

[1] Articles in *D. N. B.*

[2] Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, i, 47.

[3] This work exhibits a knowledge of Strauss's *Leben Jesu* (1835) but carries the criticism, for the first time in English, after Robert Taylor, to the complete rejection of the historicity of Jesus. Wheeler mentions that the authorship has been ascribed to J. C. Blumenfeld, author of *The New Ecce Homo, or the Self Redemption of Man*, 1839. I have so far traced no contemporary discussion of either.

[4] Wheeler, *Biog. Dict. of Freethinkers; Oracle of Reason*, ii, 403–4; Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, i, 109–10. See p. 111 as to other cases. Miss Roalfe married a Scotchman, and died at Galashiels in 1880.

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books and tracts were: 'Baptism a Pagan Rite' (1843), 'Religion Superseded,' 'Prayer,' 'A Conversation on the Being of God,' and a protest against capital punishment. A conspectus of utilitarianism by her justifies the claims for her as an able dialectician; and the record that "in courage of advocacy, and in the thoroughness of her view, no woman, except Frances Wright, was to be compared to her," explains sufficiently her success in alarming alike "the timid and the bold."[1]

Frances Wright, afterwards Madame D'Arusmont (1795–1852), likewise combined philanthropy and freethought. Daughter of a Scottish freethinker of private means, who circulated freethinking books in Dundee, she lost her parents in infancy, but developed her heredity so rapidly as to produce at eighteen her sketch 'A Few Days in Athens' (pub. 1822), generously pronounced by Richard Garnett[2] "a graceful and sometimes powerful exercise of rhetorical fancy," in which she defended the Epicurean philosophy. Fascinated by Botta's History of the American War of Independence, she sailed for America in 1818 with her younger sister, and produced (1821) a volume of letters on American life, one of the first of the library of English books on that theme. The successful tragedy, *Altorf* (1819), further proved her versatility.

Her reputation lives mainly through her labours on the practical problem of slavery, which she took up in 1824, on her return to the States from a three years' sojourn at Paris. Her attempted solution, taking the form of purchasing a tract of land in Tennessee which she peopled with negro slaves whom she counted on to work out their salvation, came to nothing, and her toils broke her health. The Southern planters, whom she had hoped to induce to follow up her experiment, remained hostile, and her slaves had to be sent to Hayti. But, in the words of Garnett, it is to her lasting honour that she was "almost the first to discern the importance of the slavery question, and to settle it on a basis of amity and good feeling."

An undisciplined enthusiast, very self-conscious and keenly alive to the personal impression she was gifted to make (though her marriage was unhappy), she was a reformer rather than a thinker, and her rationalism took Owenite colours; but a rationalist she was, seeing in religion a mental slavery, as fitly to be abolished as the physical.[3] Nor did she scruple to hazard her popularity in the new character of a woman lecturer in America by delivering (1829) a course of popular lectures in which the reigning orthodoxy was hardily assailed. Religion she crisply defines as "a belief in, and homage rendered to, existences unseen and causes unknown."[4] She was a friend of the Owens, and the younger notes with admiration that she had the wit to see in the survival of Judaism—wit-

[1] Sketch in *Half-Hours with Freethinkers*, 1865; Wheeler, *Biog. Dict.*
[2] *D. N. B.*
[3] Letter to Mary Shelley, 1827, in Mrs. Julian Marshall's *Life of Mary Shelley*, ii, 168–70.
[4] *Course of Popular Lectures*, Eng. ed. p. 73.

lessly acclaimed by Christian apologists as a proof of the Divine plan—the simple result of persecution.[1]

13. In William Howitt's 'Popular History of Priestcraft in all Ages and Nations' (1833) we have an anti-clerical as distinguished from an anti-Christian polemic, but nonetheless acceptable to the militant freethinkers. Howitt was a professed "adherent of the main doctrines of the Quakers and the New Testament," but there is small trace of Quakerism in his language. "Arrogance and atrocity," he sums up, after giving plenty of evidence, "are prominent and imperishable features in the priestly character."[2] "We have waded," he says again, "through an ocean of priestly enormities."[3] It was significant of the political temper of the time that the *Athenæum's* verdict on the book ran: "It is a splendid piece of eloquence, and reminds us a good deal of the prose of Milton"; and the *Monthly Repository* followed suit. No less naturally the clerical *British Magazine* took the view that the author had "written himself *Fiend* in every page"; and Archdeacon Wilkins, of Nottingham, a pluralist recorded by Howitt to have had eight livings, assailed him with proper wrath as guilty of "devilishness."

In a 'Vindication' which ran through many editions Howitt retaliated with visible enjoyment, specifying first the "miserable poverty of the style" of the Archdeacon, and the "malignant bitterness of heart which it betrays." Wilkins had revealed the clerical spirit of his generation by indicting Howitt as equally obnoxious in respect of being a chemist and a follower of "the republican and Arian Milton." This was the way to foment the anti-clericalism which stamped the period of the first Reform Bill, and which had other exponents than Howitt, who quotes from 'The Journal of Job Scott' the maxim that "the clergy form a dark eclipse between God and men's souls." Writing in the infancy of modern scientific history, such students of the past were undertaking, albeit in an unscientific temper, a research of obvious importance, and in their way they vigorously countered the delusive past-worship of the Tractarian movement. But their sanguine assumption that "natural" theism and the pure cult of Christ would make everybody happy if only priests were got rid of belongs to the Utopian generation. The next was to witness a twofold critical investigation of religion and social structure.

14. As regards militant freethought on the popular plane, the activities thus far reviewed may be said to be summed-up in 'The Infidel's Text-Book' (1846), a condensed reproduction of thirteen lectures by Robert Cooper[4] (b. 1819), a young schoolmaster in the Co-operative

[1] Debate between Dale Owen and O. Bacheler, ed. 1840, p. 159.
[2] Work cited, p. 136. [3] *Id.* p. 270.
[4] Sometimes confused with Thomas Cooper, author of *The Purgatory of Suicides* (1845), who, setting out as a Methodist, was for a time a local preacher; left Methodism because of the knavery of a superintendent; was for some years a Chartist lecturer; suffered imprisonment (1843–5) and turned sceptic; lectured for seven years as a

Schools, who at seventeen was an acknowledged Owenite lecturer and debater. A youthful work by him, 'The Holy Scriptures Analysed,' was denounced by the Bishop of Exeter in the House of Lords; and he was dismissed from his post (1841), becoming a Socialist Missionary, with a strong freethinking bent.

The 'Infidel's Text-Book' reflects the temper naturally generated by persecution in young combatants, who, aspersively dubbed infidels, defiantly bear the flag. It is, as the author claims, a systematic attack on the Bible all along the line, drawing on a considerable knowledge of eighteenth-century criticism, remorselessly applied; and for a good many years it was a popular militant hand-book, till in 1858 he re-modelled it into a treatise on 'The Bible and its Evidences.' In 1854 he started the London *Investigator*, which entered on a new current of propaganda, coming in 1858 into the powerful hands of the young Charles Bradlaugh. Like him, Cooper was until his death (1868) actively engaged in political reform, thus carrying on the twofold impulse set up by Paine.

15. All such propaganda is apt to be ignored by culture-historians as not being "literature" or as not affecting the upper levels of "thought," being produced by men and women without academic "culture." But neither is most religious propaganda "literature"; while on the other hand the reasoning power of the demotic propagandist is as a rule much higher than that of the defender of the faith, who is more defective in sheer judgment than the other is in the culture relevant to the problem. The status of "thought," again, is laxly accorded to a kind of ideation that does not transcend emotionalism; and "culture" is as laxly ascribed on the score of supposed accomplishments which in no way function for wisdom, or even for amenity. Holyoake was at once a better writer and a better thinker than any but the ablest of the clergy; and he reached a large middle-class as well as a working-class audience. His vividly written *Logic of Death*, published in 1850, had reached its sixteenth thousand in 1851, its literary power being acknowledged on all sides.

When we are tracing the history of the current creed, of which the very *raison d'être* is its acceptance by the mass, of all grades of mind, the dis-

moderate freethinker and educationist; reverted (1852) to belief in a "Moral Governor"; and in time became a popular Christian propagandist. He left a somewhat derisory reputation among militant freethinkers; but his Autobiography (1872) is a not uninteresting human document, revealing a fervid lover of knowledge, who secured by his own efforts a good range of culture. His poem is forgotten; and his thinking is negligible; but he seems to have delivered more lectures than any other man in his day, and counted for something as a popular educationist. In 1850 he conducted *Cooper's Journal*, in which he published a summary of a course of his lectures on Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, in which, while applying destructive criticism to the narrative, he embodied a warm panegyric of Jesus as man and teacher. He was on visiting terms with Carlyle and Kingsley.

missal of non-academic propaganda is uncritical. Were it not for the manifold activity of popular freethought, there would have been no valid support for the later propaganda of scholars or schooled men ; since the power of resistance available to organized obscurantism would have been much greater. Between class levels, at least in British life, there is constant percolation of thought, many middle-class men absorbing intelligent propaganda given out by freelances, and in their turn reacting on the clergy, as well as on orthodoxy in their own class. It is reasonable to say, indeed, that but for the pioneering of the freelances no scholarly men of that age would have ventured on open heresy.

Religion, regarded broadly as a temper and an inculcated habit of mind, is mainly sustained by non-philosophic and non-literary teaching. Paley was long a power for English orthodoxy without being a deep thinker or a great writer. Paine, on the other hand, was a distinctly more powerful writer than Bishop Watson, alike as to manner and matter ; and the replies to Watson by Dr. Samuel Francis[1] and others were competent performances, widely read. The intellectual atmosphere of a nation, in short, is the outcome of a multitude of factors, in which the higher literature and the higher philosophy are potent only for the cultured few, save as interpreted by popular exponents. Religious England, though it then included a much larger number of scholarly men than did the little army of freethinkers, was then as now substantially a world of commonplace culture and straitened intelligence. The invasion of that was possible only by plain-speaking ; but by such invasion, persistently carried on, it was gradually affected from all sides till, as had been the case in 1789, the age of bigotry had again been transmuted to an age of comparative tolerance, in which blind belief had dwindled with bigotry.

To measure the relative efficacies of the different factors is always extremely difficult ;[2] but it is an unscientific if not a snobbish course to exclude from the survey the direct polemic which reaches the more intelligent "man in the street," whether in the day of Paine or in the day of Bradlaugh. In the age of the newspaper such an evasion indeed becomes ridiculous. The opinions of the great majority of men and women are made for them by ways of "publicity" which take small account of the "higher studies." But, as a matter of fact, in the history of the renascence of freethought in nineteenth-century England, we shall find scholarship, literature, science, and philosophy constantly reflected in the direct propaganda of the freethinkers. Paine founded on astronomy ; Carlile knew his Gibbon ; Robert Dale Owen was a scholar and a trained thinker ; and Chilton conveyed to many the conception of a continuous gradation of forms in nature, long before Darwin. And around them was rising a

[1] *Watson Refuted*, 1796. Often reprinted, by Carlile and others.

[2] It is worth noting that the circulation of the *Oracle of Reason* was stated at 4,000, a figure much higher, probably, than the sale reached by Hennell's *Origin of Christianity* or *Christian Theism* (1838–41).

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new generation of scholars, thinkers, educationists, scientists, and men of letters, who variously led and followed them in the work of permeation. Broadly speaking, utilitarian ethics had been made a familiar conception among English freethinkers when Bentham was juristically shaping it, and long before the younger Mill made it popular.

16. The scientific factor can be seen at work on the popular plane in the history of some educational movements. Much good work had been done in the first half of the century by the Mechanics' Institutes which then multiplied, under the active furtherance of such variously progressive spirits as Dr. Birkbeck, the founder of the movement,[1] Brougham, Sir Francis Burdett, Joseph Hume, and Thirlwall. So far as might be, those Institutes were kept to the path of orthodoxy ; but wherever science entered, some forms of freethought followed, and in 1848 the younger and more advanced associates of the London Mechanics' Institution established the first Birkbeck School, in the teeth of the bitter opposition of the older supervisors. The new departure was definitely unorthodox,[2] though strictly scientific in its educational work.

Thereupon George Combe in Edinburgh resolved to found a Secular School on similar lines, with a special insistence on Phrenology as a guiding principle ; and under W. Mattieu Williams (afterwards F.C.S. and F.R.A.S.) a "Williams Secular School" flourished in the northern capital from 1848 to 1854. Strange to say, it was warmly supported by the *Scotsman*, at that period a Liberal periodical. By Combe's own account to Williams in 1848 :—

> "In this city evangelical religion is strong, active, and penetrating ; and it uses *all means* to command every class of the inhabitants. It will oppose our school, and vilify it and ourselves by every possible endeavour..... Scarcely any person of the middle, and none of the upper ranks here, will lend his name or countenance to our school, through sheer fear of the theological outcry, although many wish us well. Mr. Robert Chambers, for instance, is entirely with us in point of principle and detail, yet in a note which he wrote me yesterday he says that we shall fail, and he will not countenance us. The 'fear of folk' operates irresistibly in the class of persons from whom you desire to draw the pupils—viz., clerks and superior mechanics. They tremble before their evangelical masters and clergymen."[3]

Thus did the spirit of innovating science fare in the region of Britain where Christian religion was at that period most firmly endenizened, the

[1] George Birkbeck, M.D. (1776–1841), was a fellow student of Brougham and Jeffrey at Edinburgh. At the age of twenty-three, as Professor of Natural Philosophy at the Andersonian University (afterwards Anderson's College) at Glasgow, he began his labours for popular adult education ; and the Glasgow Mechanics' Institution, established in 1823, initiated the series of schools so entitled ; that of London, of which Birkbeck was an active financial supporter and first President, following in 1824. It was long afterwards established as the Birkbeck Institution in his honour. The Science and Art Department is the fruit of those beginnings.

[2] Memoir prefixed to Mattieu Williams's *Vindication of Phrenology*, 1894, pp. x–xi.

[3] Memoir cited.

new Free Church movement (1843) having generated a new contagion of fanatical pietism. In England the situation was less strained, the secular temper being there more prosperous. But the situation was broadly the same as regards the ostensible supremacy of faith ; and it was only by a slow transmutation that in both latitudes the high pressures of the religious life of the early Victorian period gave way to the insistent tide of saner thought.

§ 2. *Non-popular Propaganda*

1. At the very height of the religious reaction, in 1811, there was printed anonymously, for private circulation, a work entitled *Œdipus Judaicus*, by Sir William Drummond,[1] sometime a diplomatist at Naples, and already an author of philosophic and politico-philosophical and archæological works (1793, 1805, 1810). These, and his *magnum opus*, 'Origines, a speculative investigation of the origins of ancient Empires, States, and Cities' (4 vols. 1824–29), have passed into obscurity, with his blank-verse poem, 'Odin' (1817) ; but the chance of his unpublished work falling into the hands of the Rev. G. D'Oyly, Christian Advocate in the University of Cambridge and Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, led to his becoming publicly known as an "infidel," and, in consequence, acquiring a considerable influence for freethought.

Like most freethinkers of that age, Drummond was a professed theist, and he wrote, like Paine, to disencumber theism of the historic and other discredit attaching to certain Biblical narratives, including the 49th chapter of Genesis and the book of Joshua. So far had he carried his theism in his 'Academical Questions' (1805) that Shelley felt constrained, in his *Necessity of Atheism*, to reproach him for straining it to the point of declaring the Newtonian theory of gravitation to be false. "Had this author," said his juvenile critic, "instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood, his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic and the toleration of the philosopher."[2]

Modesty was not a salient aspect of the theist who rejected the law of gravitation as being incompatible with his conception of Theos ; and the temper of the philosopher did not mark his protests in the preface to the *Œdipus Judaicus* against the theism of the authors of the Pentateuch. But at least the strength of his feelings was revealed, undiplomatically enough, in his phrases about the people who "find it quite simple that the triune Jehovah should dine on veal cutlets at Abraham's table," and in still less refined pleasantries. There was no dubiety about the earnestness of the prefatory polemic against the anthropomorphism of the Bible ;

[1] In an edition of 250. The printer told Drummond that he could easily have sold an edition of 1,000 after it had been talked about.

[2] *Necessity of Atheism*, end. Shelley again refers to Drummond for a "profound disquisition" on Power (= force) in a note to the *Refutation of Deism*,

and the Cambridge Christian Advocate was ill advised in forcing on public notice a privately circulated book conveying such criticism.

His rejoinder varies between impotence and insolence, founding charges of ignorance on a printer's oversight, imputing ignorance of Hebrew to a better Hebraist than himself, and actually contending for the Pentateuchal origin of the Zodiac.[1] After his first 'Letters' to Drummond (1812) had been vigorously replied to by 'Vindex'—evidently Drummond himself—his further 'Remarks' elicited a series of still more vigorous replies by 'Vindex,' 'Biblicus,' and 'Candidus' (evidently all from the same mint), some of which slightly apologize for the veal cutlets, but leave little standing of Mr. D'Oyly as scholar, theologian, gentleman, or critic.

Drummond's special theory of an allegorical purpose in Genesis and Joshua has no scientific value, and appealed neither to pietists nor to freethinkers, who in general never adopted it. But his serious denunciation of the gross anthropomorphism of the Hebrew records, and the theology bound up with it, entered into the stream of tendency, and made him a force for "infidelity" in his own despite.

> "My notions of the Divine Nature," he writes, "may be very heterodox, but they do not permit me to attribute human infirmities to God. I cannot suppose the Deity first creating our little earth, and then fretting because he had done so. I cannot ascribe to him all the scolding and cursing about idolatry; all the squabbling about capricious laws; and all that prattling and gossiping about insignificant rites and ceremonies."

While the sellers of Paine's *Age of Reason* were being industriously prosecuted the author of these protests was perforce unmolested, his doctrines being in currency only through the zeal of the Christian Advocate. Drummond's *Origines* sank out of sight; but the *Œdipus* was reprinted as late as 1866, and in the seventies was supplying matter for freethought leaflets.

John Hollis, who in 1812 printed a little book entitled *Free Thoughts*—consisting of a criticism of Paley's reply to Hume, with some other polemics and papers, and concluding with 'Thoughts on a Future State'—cannot be reckoned in that regard a propagandist, inasmuch as he explains in his Advertisement that, not wishing to let his papers be lost, he "resolved to print a few copies and distribute them among his friends. But he never intended that they should be *published*." They were accordingly never reprinted.

They present a very calm and clear intelligence, quite convinced of the untenability of the belief in miracles and the incredibility of the Resurrection. In 1796 Hollis had published a pamphlet of 'Sober and Serious Reasons for Scepticism as it Concerns Revealed Religion,' praising the ethic of the gospels but quietly avowing

[1] *Remarks*, 1813, pp. 185–201.

inability to believe in miracles, and gravely antagonizing the doctrine of future punishments—positions again taken up in his *Apology for Disbelief in Revealed Religion* (1799). Hollis, who "came of an opulent dissenting family," was a man of good repute, and probably escaped persecution by reason of the perfect amenity of his character and his writing. He must have counted for something as a light-giver in a cloudy time.

2. In 1816, in the full stream of repression, there appeared, in London, without any publisher's name, a pseudonymous book, 'Janus on Sion, or Past and to Come, By Christian Emanuel, Esq.,' in which there is delivered a concentrated attack on all the main features of "Scriptural" faith. "Janus" is a scholar doing the work of Paine and Annet, quoting Photius, Plutarch, Grotius, Stobaeus, Spenser, Polyhistor, Laplace, Aristophanes, Plato, Suidas, Selden, Athenæus, Pliny, Aristotle, Strabo, Herodotus, Capitolinus, and Julius Pollux, and striking with curt and caustic scorn at the Miracles of both Testaments, the Prophecies of both, and the Mysteries, Morality, and Consolation of the Christian faith. On the title-page are the lines :—

> Mysterious power!
> Reveal'd, yet unreveal'd, darkness in light!
> Number in unity! Our joy, our dread!
> Tri[u]ne, unutterable, unconceiv'd!
> Absconding yet demonstrable great God;[1]

and the treatise thus opens :—

> When such commotion has been excited in the religious world; when three potentates have concluded a Christian treaty; when the ministers of the sovereigns of Europe have established an everlasting peace in the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity; when we had almost obtained in London an Association of theological booksellers, as we have long enjoyed the Society for the Suppression of Vice; when Prayer-Book and Homily societies, and Bible societies, central and eccentric, urban and suburban, have been formed by Protestants and Dissenters, who distribute at home and abroad, by sea and land, hundreds of thousands of volumes of the Scriptures in all languages; when such efforts are made to convert Jews in England, and Caffres and Hindus in Africa and the East; when the works of Hannah More and Mr. Wilberforce—the *alphabets* of the Innocents—are rivalled by their aspiring disciples; when the Apocalypse is illustrated by some ghostly author once a week: at such a time a compendium of the most important particulars, which constitute the Church of England established by law, may be instructive.

The book is written with a terseness not to be anticipated from the opening sentence. The concealed author is the spirit of Voltaire with a less light hand, a "typical" scholarly Briton thrusting ironically at the incredibilities of creed and the follies of its defenders, writing for the

[1] On the present writer's copy there is here appended the name "Churchey," but this appears to be a neat work of the pen, not of the printer.

plain man but scattering his Greek and Latin notes with heedless zest till he warms to his work. There is nothing so stringent and so powerful, so vigilant and so mordant, so masculine and so grimly humorous, in the whole mass of freethought writing meant for the general reader. He has been all over the ground, knows all the clinches, has read all the books; is learned without the extravagance of Drummond, as logical as Bentham, as pungent as Porson, and as nervously direct as Paine.

All the current gambits come in for notice. "I agree with the conclusive supposition of Mr. Kirwan,[1] the chemist, that the spot 'on which Paradise stood, seems to have been destroyed by a volcano.'"[2] The current inanities are sardonically sampled: e.g., that from the article in the then current Encyclopædia Britannica: "Adam himself continued 930 years a living monument of the justice and mercy of God, as well as of his love and long-suffering towards the sinner."[3] Biting epigrams abound. "Thus the first reported ceremony of religion, in the first and only family on earth, caused a brother's murder." But the business in hand is unflinching, ruthless, cut-and-thrust argument and criticism of evidence. He can convict Gibbon of oversight in saying that only in one religion is the God the sacrifice; and the ethic of the gospel is as destructively assailed as the history. The wit, throughout, is grim, but spontaneous. Not a sentence is wasted.

And yet the book "never got across the footlights." No publisher dared have published, at that date, this packed magazine of missiles; no Christian Advocate even named it. In all likelihood it was effectively suppressed without a prosecution; and the most accomplished gladiator on the freethought side in that period never found his due audience. The authorship has been traced by Wheeler to George Ensor (1769–1843), under whose name the book was republished in 1835 with the cumbrous title, 'A Review of the Miracles, Prophecies, and Mysteries of the Old and New Testaments, and of the Morality and Consolation of the Christian Religion.' But by that time it was partly out of date, its opening paragraphs having had special reference to the situation in 1816, and the original antagonists having disappeared. Thus the book still missed its due mark. Ensor, a brilliant Irishman, born at Dublin and educated at Trinity College, wrote a number of other books, one being an unlucky attack on Malthus. He was more happy in his 'Natural Theology Examined' (1836), which was reprinted some twenty years later in the 'Library of Reason.' But he remains one of the bright spirits who miss fame.

3. We have seen how Sir T. C. Morgan's 'Sketches of the Philosophy of Life' (1818) had incurred the invective of the professional Christian Advocate, and how his 'Sketches of the Philosophy of Morals' (1822) is

[1] One of the butts of Thomas Love Peacock. See his *Poems*, ed. Johnson, p. 146, *note*.
[2] *Janus on Sion*, p. 15. [3] *Id.* p. 14.

recorded to have fallen still-born from the press. This certainly cannot have been on the score of unreadableness, though it has the rhetorical style of the period. It is in fact at once sufficiently popular and sufficiently scientific in its presentation of the ideas of the French "ideological" school, who were Morgan's personal friends, to have found a wide audience if newly published a generation later. His powers of analytical reasoning are comparable with those of Lawrence, who incurred similar vilification for similar scientific views. In Morgan's case, accordingly, we seem compelled to infer a special machinery of ostracism, motived by the knowledge of his rejection of the Christian creed. The fact of his having to abandon his medical practice supports the inference of a crusade against the sale of his book; and his hostile allusions to "the Tories" may give the clue. It is a work of very effective polemic on many lines, put out of action by social forces.

4. One of the most influential writers of that age, Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), must be classed among non-popular propagandists in respect of his treatise *Not Paul but Jesus* (1823), edited from his manuscripts by Francis Place in 1817,[1] and the 'Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind, by Philip Beauchamp' (1822), arranged in the same fashion from the author's papers by the young George Grote.[2] These books were excluded from Bentham's collected works by the editor, Sir John Bowring, and, apart from Mill's remarks on the *Analysis*, have been very little discussed in biographical notices. This may reasonably be set down to the difficulty of inferring confidently their practical purpose.

In both cases, however, it was certainly anti-clerical, though elaborately disguised. Pseudonymous as the *Analysis* is, it carefully guards against the risk of prosecution by the prefaced and constantly repeated stipulation that what it discusses is always the influence of *natural* religion on life, "apart from revelation." But alike for deists and Christians, in that period, Natural Religion meant simple abstract deism, and not any priestly system, whether with or without sacred books; whereas the *Analysis* largely operates against sacerdotalism. Inasmuch as it does so on general lines, it is obviously as applicable in this respect to the Christian as to any other religious system, indeed more so, that being the most sacerdotally organized.

Thus it tended to miss its mark by mystification. Certainly the underlying drift of the book is a drastic criticism of the effect of *organised* religion on contemporary society; and it even makes out a strong ethical case against all theistic belief considered as a regulator of conduct. But this latter argument would repel the freethinking deists, who were then

[1] Graham Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, ed. 1908, p. 84.

[2] See *The Minor Works of George Grote*, edited by Professor Bain, 1873, p. 18; *Athenæum*, May 31, 1873; J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*, p. 69; and *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 76.

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From a Miniature painted from Life in 1805

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the majority; while Christians in general would take small offence at a work that expressly excepted revealed religion from its criticism, and thus ostensibly discredited every religion but their own. Only the few would recognize its philosophic upshot. It greatly influenced J. S. Mill, whose essay on 'The Utility of Religion' echoes its beginning; and if it had been less drably juristic in style it might have influenced many more. Schemed and written as it was, its circulation was small, and remained so after reprinting in 1875.

Even, however, if it were "useful" thus to assail all sacerdotalism during the terrified reaction against the French Revolution, the book was not on that side particularly necessary for the freethinkers as a disguised account of the social harm wrought by Christianity. Mill's repeated statement that sceptics had mostly ignored that aspect of the case tells of his inacquaintance with the literature of French deism and atheism in general; for there the topic is common. But, for that matter, it is a large element in the narrative of Gibbon, who conveyed his views to his age and country with sufficient success; and a dark indictment of historic Christianity can be compiled from the orthodox Ecclesiastical History of Mosheim.

The purpose of *Not Paul but Jesus* is less clear. It is a stringent indictment of Paul as a mendacious self-seeker, the charge being built up by taking the Acts as decisive against the claims and statements of the Epistles, which are all treated as authentic. From the point of view of the Unitarian 'Freethinking Christians,' the aim was to discredit all the Christian documents alike, but that proposition cannot be forensically sustained. It would seem that Bentham in old age was much provoked by the resistance of the clergy to all educational reform, and hoped by discrediting dogmatic Christianity, as purely Pauline and not Jesuine, to weaken the Church. Whatever his hopes, no such end was visibly promoted by his bulky book, which was never reprinted.

The statement of his sometime secretary, the American Neale, that Bentham was an atheist, though apparently accepted by Mr. Benn (*Hist. of Rationalism*, i, 210, 295), has never been properly sifted. Mr. Benn puts in the same class Erasmus Darwin, Godwin, and Charles Fox; but the last-named was probably a deist; Darwin certainly professed himself one; and an assertion by Coleridge to the contrary (cited by Mr. Benn with a wrong reference) is poor evidence. Godwin's atheism, again, was temporary. When Dr. Channing in a letter to Lucy Aikin cited Neale's assertion, his correspondent scouted the statement, albeit à priori, adding that she had heard the atheism of Godwin denied (*Correspondence of W. E. Channing and Lucy Aikin*, 1874, pp. 193, 198–9).

Mr. Benn at this point (i, 295) treats the *Analysis* as directed against natural religion = theism. But soon he recognizes (p. 304) that Bentham "evidently had the Roman Catholic priesthood in

view." In so far as the book impeaches other religious systems it is still their priestly and dogmatic machinery that is mainly assailed, not the bare belief in a Deity, save in so far as that is connected with a doctrine of rewards and punishments. It is quite possible, then, that he held by the then reviving form of theism which conceived Deity as governing solely by "natural law"; and there is no clear evidence to the contrary, Neale having offered none beyond his personal inference. In any case, Bentham's real influence lay in the fields of ethics and jurisprudence.

5. Unpopularity was thoroughly secured by Julian Hibbert [1801–34] for his 'Περι Δεισιδαιμονιας: Plutarchus and Theophrastus on Superstition, with Various Appendices and a Life of Plutarchus' (1828), by festively marking it "Price one Guinea." An edition of a Greek classic in uncials, printed from the author's own type, containing so many misprints in the careful English translation and elsewhere as to set up deep misgivings about the accuracy of the Greek, was hardly likely to be in demand even among the scholars; and Hibbert's enterprise, though it shows a very scholarly habit of mind and much various learning, made no stir. It remains, however, an interesting memorial on both heads, for both the bibliophile[1] and the freethinker. To his erudite notes he adds an essay 'On the Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar,' no less erudite; another 'Of Persons falsely entitled Atheists'; a third on 'Various Definitions of an Important Word' [Nature = God]; and a final 'Catalogue of the Principal Works written against Atheism.'[2]

Hibbert, a lovable soul, who left a shining memory among friends and beneficiaries,[3] proved at once his erudition and his unpracticality by compiling for publication by Carlile part of a never-completed 'Dictionary of Modern Anti-Superstitionists' (1826), which in 128 pages reached only to the name of Annet.[4] It has been stated[5] that he died of the shock of having been hissed in a London magistrate's court, and insulted by magistrate and attorney, for avowing himself an atheist.[6] It is, however,

[1] The present writer's copy appears to have been corrected by Hibbert with much artistic care, his minutely neat alterations beginning in the second line of the preface. It tells how he had previously made a "Typographical Experiment" with the *Orphica*, and "had been guilty of the folly of having" [in each case] "300 copies taken, and all on too fine paper"; and neither the press nor the booksellers paid the least attention. He had sold twenty-five copies of the *Orphica* ("three forced upon H. ——, Esq."—the name is erased) for £3 9s. 6d., which left him £31 2s. out of pocket. He had come off well. The entire preface is an entertaining record by "a poor devil who did his best."

[2] Finally come ten pages of "the *principal* corrigenda and addenda."

[3] But unnoticed in *D. N. B.*

[4] Wheeler, pref. to *Biog. Dict.* Hibbert in a note in the *Theophrastus* tells that the work was "discontinued for want of purchasers." A *Chronological Table of Modern Anti-Superstitionists* had appeared in 1825.

[5] Mrs. Carlile Campbell's *Life of Carlile*, p. 250.

[6] *Times*, Nov. 29, 1833, cited by Moncure Conway, *Centenary History of South Place Society*, 1894, p. 67. W. J. Fox had made public protest.

difficult to believe that the humorous scholar who wrote the preface above cited was "snuffed out by" a hiss and a scolding. Keats, we know, was not really "snuffed out by an article." Hibbert's early death was probably a sad coincidence, as he has given a humorous account of his feeble health. He had often lectured on Carlile's platform, and was morally no weakling.

6. Godfrey Higgins (1773–1833), the Yorkshire squire, author of 'Anacalypsis' and 'The Celtic Druids,' if he can be said to have belonged to any school, may be classed with Drummond, whom he resembles and partly follows in his exposition of a theory of an ancient esoteric astrological teaching, pervading all mythologies and all religions, from the furthest East to the furthest West. But he stamps all his manifold learning with his own image and superscription. After a military service of a dozen years (1802–13), he resigned his commission as major, and, save for some energetic pamphlets on money payments (1819) and the Corn Laws (1826) and lunatic asylums, devoted himself to the studies which yielded his anti-Sabbatarian *Horæ Sabbaticæ* (1826), his *Celtic Druids* (1829), his *Apology for Mohamed* (1829), and his *Anacalypsis* (1836).[1]

The general historical theory of Higgins, like that of Drummond, has long passed out of discussion, as being prematurely built on a mass of pre-scientific learning, collated in times of speculative history. He is deep in Hyde, Kircher, Gale, Cudworth, Beausobre, Faber, Bryant, Montfaucon, Vossius, Jablonski, Sir William Jones, Creuzer, Dupuis, and a dozen other orientalists, and all bring grist to his mill. At his outset he confidently posits the sun myth,[2] round which he builds a structure of ancient mysteries conveyed through all lands. But what lights up and individualizes his whole expansive treatise is his strenuous and well-nourished antipathy to priests and priesthoods and to orthodox prejudice of all orders. He has been named as the original for the character of the freethinking Squire in the late Mrs. Humphry Ward's novel, *Robert Elsmere*.[3]

He throws out, indeed, many valid theses and suggestions—as when he shows the identity of the Samson and Hercules myths,[4] rooting in the Sun-God Shamas; notes the traces of a Hebrew Goddess and the diffusion of the crucified deity; and pronounces Buffon and Lawrence to have proved the animal affinities of man; though his surmise—adopted[5] from Prichard—that man was "originally a Negro" did not find favour. He

[1] '*Anacalypsis:* an Attempt to draw aside the veil of the Saitic Isis; or, An Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions, by Godfrey Higgins, Esq., F.S.A., F.R.Asiat.Soc., F.R.Ast.S., late of Skellow Grange, near Doncaster'; 2 vols. 4to. Rep. in 1878, of vol. 1 only (London, New York, and (?) Glasgow).

[2] *Anacalypsis*, ed. 1878, pp. 10, 12, 26, 62, 400, etc.

[3] She herself, however, expressly specified as her model her old friend Mark Pattison, though he was not a squire. *Life of Mrs. Humphry Ward*, by her Daughter, Mrs. J. P. Trevelyan, 1923, p. 51.

[4] *Anacalypsis*, p. 323.

[5] *Id.* p. 396.

had been the friend of Geddes,[1] whom he affectionately commemorates; and a priest who supplies him with useful information becomes "that learned priest"; but he is "not surprised that the Rev. and superstitious Parkhurst should state Hercules to be an emblem of the future Saviour. .....However, let me not be abused for first seeing this: it was the pious Parkhurst who discovered it....."[2]

Like every other scholar of the time, he is an untroubled theist: hence, indeed, his hostility to priests. "The unceasing exertions of Christian priests to conceal the truth" about the pre-Christian vogue of Trinities;[3] the inculcation of sacrifices for the sake of the priest's larder[4]—such are the themes which make him explosive. But specially indignant is he over the Christian sacrifice. "Very true, indeed, Reverend Sir," he apostrophizes Faber, who has noted the cruelty of all sacrifice—"an act of cruelty, as a type of an infinitely greater act of cruelty and injustice, in the murder by the Creator of his only Son, by the hands of the Jews..... What strange beings men, in all ages, have made their Gods."[5]

Anticipating—in fact hoping—that "the author will be honoured like M. Volney with the abuse of the priests," he "denies that he hates the religion of Jesus. He does hate the hypocrisy of its priests, and the intolerance of their, not *its*, principles—as, on the contrary, he loves the liberality and tolerating spirit of the ancient, uncorrupted religion of the Buddhist or Brahmin;.....which contains no creed inculcating that *except a man believe this or that he cannot be saved*; a creed whose tendency is to fill the world with war and bloodshed, and to sacrifice, indeed, the best interests of society to those of a corrupt and pernicious order or corporation."[6]

For him, Jesus was a "philosophical Nazarite, Carmelite, or Essenian of Samaria";[7] and he had planned to set forth in a future book "the Christianity of Jesus Christ from his own mouth." Dying in 1833, when only his first volume had been printed off, he was baulked of the response of the priests to his greetings; and the cost of his large quartos, with their numerous and interesting prints, prevented any wide circulation for the book. But it served as a mine of suggestion for freethinkers for half a century; and the (unfulfilled) plan of a reprint in 1878 was a recognition of its repute.

7. Only in a section by himself could we affect properly to class the Rev. J. E. Smith, A.M.,[8] author of a volume of lectures entitled 'The Antichrist, or, Christianity Reformed: in which is demonstrated from the Scriptures, in opposition to the prevailing opinion of the whole Religious World, that Evil and Good are from one source, Devil and God one Spirit;

[1] *Id.* p. 67. [2] *Id.* p. 325. [3] *Id.* p. 116. [4] *Id.* p. 99.
[5] *Id.* p. 100. [6] *Id.* p. 405. [7] *Id.* p. 403 *n.*
[8] Widely known in his day as "Shepherd Smith" by reason of his editing a journal called *The Shepherd*. For a contemporary view of him see "*Serious Thoughts*, etc., by a Student in Realities," 1836–37, p. 128.

and that one is merely manifested to make perfect the other' (London, 1833). But he may be noticed here. "The following Lectures," says the preface, "were delivered before an audience chiefly composed of Infidels. I myself, however, am no Infidel, believing all nature to be conducted on a systematic plan." "At a future period," the preface concludes, "I hope to address a Christian audience, and then my style shall be different.....The principle, however, and tendency of both modes of address are the same, namely, physical, moral, and intellectual liberty."

In sum, Mr. Smith, generally known as a "Universalist," appears to be a theoretic pantheist, who, as is usual with pantheists, criticizes what he considers to be moral and intellectual error as an atheist would. He has evidently (p. 14) read Dale Owen's recent debate with Bacheler, for critical purposes, but is chiefly concerned to discredit the religion of fear and ceremonial. "Christianity, and all ceremonious religion, is a mere form of virtue, without the substance."[1] "Nature is the author of Christianity.....Christ merely collected the scattered fragments and embodied them in one, without comprehending them."[2] Nevertheless, Antichrist admits "the divinity of Christ as an incontrovertible doctrine." He was born of a virgin. "His birth was extraordinary, not miraculous: there is no such thing as a miracle.....for everything is a miracle."[3] Mr. Smith was presumably not a serious thorn in the flesh of the Church, though he had a considerable scattered influence, and claimed among other things to have countervailed the infidelity of the Owen movement, with which he collaborated on his own lines as long as he could. His most extensive impact on his time (1801–57) was probably made by his founding *The Family Herald.*[4]

8. A more intelligible criticism was carried on in a quasi-Unitarian body, "The Freethinking Christians," who published a *Quarterly Register* in the 'twenties.[5] They condemned the doctrine of the Fall; affirmed (with Luther) the Scriptural resurrection of the dead as against the immortality of the soul; disparaged death-bed repentance; censured public prayer; assailed alike Quakerism and Deism; and "unmasked the hypocrisy" of Bentham's *Not Paul, but Jesus.*[6] The history of the sect is hard to trace, but its existence is notable as an illustration of the sporadic play of debate on religion in a society in which, as Crabbe informs us in *The Borough*, there were "Swedenbourgeans" in the villages in 1810.

9. In the category of non-popular propaganda may be included the little work of Robert Fellowes, LL.D. (1771–1847, the friend of Dr. Parr),

[1] P. 31. [2] P. 226. [3] P. 327.

[4] His career has been largely recovered in the biography, '*Shepherd*' *Smith, the Universalist: The Story of a Mind*, by (his nephew) W. Anderson Smith, 1892. A large book by him, *The Divine Drama of History and Civilization*, was published in 1854, and a novel, *The Coming Man*, posthumously in 1873.

[5] Current in 1822–24. [6] Vol. for 1823-24, p. 188.

entitled 'The Religion of the Universe' (12mo, 1836; 3rd ed. 1864). After being for a time a curate Fellowes received a fortune of £200,000, and became one of the noted philanthropists of his age, promoting alike social schemes and university studies. In his youth he had written a number of platitudinous orthodox works—'A Picture of Christian Philosophy, or.....Illustration of the Character of Jesus' (1799), 'The Anti-Calvinist' (1800), 'Religion without Cant' (1801), 'The Guide to Immortality' (3 vols., 1804), and even 'A Body of Theology' (1807). In 1836 he appeared in a new spiritual dress.

The 'Religion of the Universe' is a reduction of religion to a simple theism, which retains, as Paine had done, a "consolatory" faith in immortality. In the preface the author announces that he has "travelled far and wide from the confines of what is commonly called orthodoxy, at which [he] set out, till, after a long period of doubt and perplexity," he had found peace in "a pure and unsophisticated theism." His former beliefs have become "irrational, mysterious, and mischievous dogmas." "Christianity itself, as it is professed in this country, has degenerated into a totally different system from what it was in its original form. Avarice and ambition have made it subservient to their purposes.....The public mind is gradually becoming ripe for religious institutions of a better..... kind than any which now exist, or have ever been seen."

The line of the theist's progress appears to have been that of science, which he confidently turns to the account of the Design Argument. As to immortality, he offers the singular plea[1] that whereas the physical organization of man is "perfect," "without the possibility of improvement," the moral man is not, and must therefore be held to have an individual future. There is no contemporary sign of any wide impression made by this placid polemic, which retains something of the platitude of tone of the works that preceded it. An ex-cleric who argued strongly against prayer, declaring that "We anthropomorphize the Deity: we make a man, a frail, mutable, vacillating man of the Eternal,"[2] could make no appeal to a Church which, after a century of such argument, holds to its Prayer-Book as one of its corner-stones.

Fellowes in his Appendix quotes from an article in the second number of the *London Review* (1835) protests against prayer and praise, as strong as his own. Such protests have been chronically made ever since by churchmen in England and Scotland, with no effect on church practice. The broad explanation is that the assumption made by the theist of the absolute benevolence of his Deity is not a real part of the consciousness of the average worshipper. Fellowes's £200,000 probably discounted, for the million, his certitude as to the benevolent fore-ordination of everything. On the other hand, his theistic optimism was philosophically impotent against the criticism which points out that it is not an induction

[1] Work cited, 3rd ed. p. 221. [2] *Id.* p. 78.

from Nature but a mere retention of one theological dogma in the act of repudiating the dogmatic basis.

Such were some of the portents before the accession of Queen Victoria. They would perhaps not have discomfited the Scottish Episcopalian D.D. who in 1830 announced that "Infidelity has had its day; it, depend upon it, will never be revived—NO MAN OF GENIUS WILL EVER WRITE ANOTHER WORD IN ITS SUPPORT."[1] Genius, indeed, is rare in polemic literature in general, as it was certainly denied to Dr. Morehead. But probably no man in the century since he published his prophecy has thought fit to endorse it.

§ 3. *Poetry and General Literature*

1. While the pious poetry of Cowper undoubtedly retained a wide vogue for half-a-century after his death, even that was soon being jostled by the new spirit. In England it was due above all to Shelley that the very age of reaction was confronted with unbelief in lyric form. His immature *Queen Mab* (1813), though not seriously published by the young poet, was vital enough with conviction to serve as an inspiration to a host of unlettered freethinkers not only in its own generation but in the next. Its notes preserved, and greatly expanded, the tract entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, for which he was expelled from Oxford; and against his will it became a people's book, the law refusing him copyright in his own work, on the memorable principle that there could be no "protection" for a book setting forth pernicious opinions. When the unauthorized reprint thus appeared (1821) he declared he had not seen the book for years, but that so far as he recollected it was "villainous trash" (Dowden, ii, 413). In the *Defence of Poetry* he repudiates by implication the atheism of "some of the French writers," and in the essay *On Life* he recants the "materialism" of his youth. Seeing that in the same essay he maintained to the last his conviction that mind could not create matter (which was the essence of materialism for his day), and had from the first stood for a "Spirit of the Universe" as against the Deity of the popular creed, his position was thus ambiguous. It is worth noting, in this connection, that so ripe a critic as the late Professor W. P. Ker pronounced that "much of Shelley's later verse is technically not so good as *Queen Mab*."[2]

No disavowals, in any case, could make Shelley figure otherwise than as a revolutionary poet. The *Revolt of Islam*, the *Prometheus Unbound*, the *Cenci*, the *Hellas*, the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, whatever their measure of artistic achievement, and the mass of the lyrics, are palpably extraneous and alien to the spirit of Christianity; and his language on Christian dogma to the last was vehemently hostile. Whether he might not in later life, had he survived, have passed to a species of pantheistic Christianity, reacting like Coleridge, but with a necessary difference, is

[1] Dr. Morehead, *Dialogues on Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1830, p. 266.
[2] *The Art of Poetry*, Seven Lectures. 1923, p. 39.

a question raised by parts of the *Hellas* and by the whole drift of the posthumously published (1859) *Essay on Christianity*.[1] Browning[2] confidently thought he had in him such a potentiality; and Gladstone, who saw in the *Prometheus Unbound* "a Christian poem, if but the name were changed," is said to have counted Shelley "the only real religious poet of the age."[3] This seems an ill-founded notion when we remember that in the last months of his life Shelley was earnestly writing to his friend, Horace Smith, of the "gross and preposterous delusions of the existing religion," even while arguing, against his otherwise clearly avowed doubts, in favour of a belief in immortality.[4]

That, however, is not a full statement of the issue. The posthumous 'Essay on Christianity' is a markedly new departure in Shelley's attitude to religion. In the Notes to *Queen Mab* he had spoken of Jesus as an impostor. This is a panegyric of Jesus as a man, thinker, and innovating teacher, crediting him with the largest ethical and philosophical conceptions, in a fashion that anticipates much of the tone and temper of Seeley, Renan, and the later Neo-Unitarian school. This attitude seems to have been taken by Shelley under the personal influence of Godwin, whose statement of it remained in manuscript until 1873.[5] Shelley's Essay might now stand, in fact, as a polemic on behalf of the newer Christianity which reduces the creed to an affirmation of the Personality of Jesus. On that view the surmise of Browning, who was at no very different standpoint, becomes not unplausible. Shelley's rejection of all evangelical dogma is now common, if not general, among professed Christians.

In the Essay on Christianity, further, Shelley develops the pantheism which, in his postulate of the "Spirit of the Universe," he had indicated in a note to *Queen Mab* as his own form of theism in contrast with that of the current religion. "There is a Power," he writes in the Essay, "by which we are surrounded, like the atmosphere in which some motionless lyre is suspended, which visits with its breath our silent chords *at*

[1] This, sometimes dated as early as 1815, clearly belongs to the latter years of Shelley's short life. Mr. H. S. Salt so dates it, here following W. M. Rossetti and J. Cordy Jeaffreson, who assigns it to 1821–22 (*The Real Shelley*, ii, 266–67).

[2] Preface to the spurious *Shelley Letters*, 1851.

[3] Severn, who makes these statements (*Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp, 1892, pp. 117, 121), was in frequent correspondence with Gladstone. He adds that "several distinguished clergymen, both Protestant and Catholic.....expressed the same opinion," even holding that "the greater belief in the Christian religion now apparent [no date given] was owing to the poetry of Shelley; indeed, one Papist went so far as to infer the conversion of England through it." It is to be remembered that the "Young England" party in the 'forties also declared Shelley to be "the only religious poet of the age" (*id.* p. 117).

[4] Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, ii, 508.

[5] Godwin's essays are as encomiastic as Shelley's, save for repeated protest against the doctrine of eternal punishment, on which he felt very strongly. See his *Essays .....Never Before Published*, 1873, pp. 14, 149 sq., 175 sq.

will"; and this doctrine of Deity he assumes to be in accordance with that of Jesus, refusing to believe that his benevolent hero can have taught the doctrine of future punishment or believed in an anthropomorphic God.

The statement that "In early days he denied the existence of any god other than an 'Omnipotent Fiend'" (Miss M. A. Bald, essay on 'Shelley's Mental Progress' in Eng. Assoc. *Essays*, vol. xiii, 1928, p. 127) is erroneous. The early 'Fiend' = Jehovah. He reappears in the Jupiter of *Prometheus Unbound*. The 'Phantasm of Jupiter,' who makes only one entrance, is in turn an Anti-Jupiter, echoing Prometheus.

The religionist can thus claim that in his last years Shelley had revoked his 'Necessity of Atheism,' and might accordingly be on the way to an acceptance of Christ as a pattern Personality and a great moral Teacher. In the juvenile but brilliant pamphlet he had written that "God is an hypothesis, and, as such, stands in need of proof: the *onus probandi* rests on the theist.....God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; he is contained under every predicate *in non* that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even his worshippers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of him." In the posthumous Essay he is content with the predicates *in non*. "The universal Being can only be described or defined by negatives.....Where indefiniteness ends, idolatry and anthropomorphism begin."

Nonetheless the fact remains that his *Queen Mab*, as his chief biographer avows,[1] is "the one poem of Shelley's which can be truly said to have had a popular career," having been freely and frequently reprinted for radicals and freethinkers for a whole generation. It thus sufficed to keep, at least for demotic radicalism and rationalism, the crown of song as against the final Tory orthodoxy[2] of the elderly Wordsworth and of Southey; and Coleridge's zeal for (amended) dogma came upon him after his hour of poetic transfiguration was past.

2. And even Coleridge, who was looked-up to by the devoutly evangelistic Edward Irving as a great religious teacher, and who, as Carlyle records in his *Life of Sterling*, was "thought to hold—he alone in England—the key of German and other transcendentalisms.....the sublime secret of believing by 'the reason' what 'the understanding' had been obliged to fling out as incredible"—even Coleridge was only for an esoteric few a satisfactory Christian. He held the heresies of a modal Trinity[3] and the non-expiatory character of the death of Christ,

[1] Dowden, ii, 416.

[2] That Wordsworth was not an orthodox Christian is fairly certain. Both in talk and in poetry he put forth a pantheistic doctrine. Cp. Benn, *Hist. of Eng. Rationalism*, i, 227–9; and Coleridge's letter of Aug. 8, 1820, in Allsop's *Letters*, etc., *of S. T. Coleridge*, 3rd ed. 1864, pp. 56–7.

[3] A *damnosa haereditas* which, with his revolt against the doctrine of expiation by blood sacrifice, he bequeathed to F. D. Maurice.

was widely distrusted by the pious, and expressed himself privately in terms which would have outraged them. Miracles, he declared, "are supererogatory. The law of God and the great principles of the Christian religion would have been the same had Christ never assumed humanity. It is for these things, and for such as these, for telling unwelcome truths, that I have been termed an atheist. It is for these opinions that William Smith assured the Archbishop of Canterbury that I was (what half the clergy are in *their lives*) an atheist. Little do these men know what atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an atheist."[1]

He would never have written this for publication. Yet even his published writings, especially the posthumous (1840) 'Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit'—an amplification of positions more straightforwardly taken up by Lessing—brought upon him[2] a charge of "Tendencies towards the Subversion of Faith." It was repelled by Maurice and by Archdeacon Hare, and by the poet's daughter, Sara, in an eagerly declamatory Note appended to the third edition (1853), the effect of which is merely to illustrate anew his own fashion of claiming to retain the principle of Faith while indulging reason to the extent of rejecting some of the more offensive narratives of the Bible and the doctrine of plenary inspiration which forced their acceptance on the truly faithful. As the orthodox reviewers complained, he was so far, like the more consistent freethinkers, "striving after intellectual liberty." All that filial piety could show was that the pietistic rationalizing of father and daughter was truly religious inasmuch as it was piously hot against the "infidelity" of more thoroughgoing minds such as Blanco White's. The stoned prophet had stoned others.

Unless the orthodox resentment of Coleridge's effort to civilize the doctrine of inspiration was partly evoked by a vision of the logical confusion he had wrought for himself, it must rank as an avowal of the sheer irrationalism of the orthodoxy of the time. As late as 1848 positions which to-day are repudiated by the majority of Anglican bishops, and which Milman had begun repudiating in 1829, would seem to have been whole-heartedly maintained among Churchmen of standing, as against the fervid pietism of Sara Coleridge. The poet's total effect on his own and the next generation was to build up towards the God-idea of auto-suggestion which was in the course of the century to supersede, for many, the religion and God-idea of "revelation."

A searching examination of Coleridge's philosophy bulks largely in Mr. Benn's *History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*. It presents the poet as one "in whom an exceptionally

[1] Allsop's *Letters*, etc., as cited, p. 47. [2] In the *English Review*, December, 1848.

weak will and an exceptionally slothful temperament went along with an almost superhuman strength of intellect and imagination"—a disconcerting estimate which might perhaps usefully be amended thus: "a brilliant analytical and speculative faculty which, for lack of moral and critical self-discipline, ultimately yielded only verbalizing formulas, commonly shaped by way of compromise with the established religious creed." Coleridge's private acceptance of Schiller's *Ueber die Sendung Mosis*, like the above-cited avowal as to Christianity, tells of his definite unorthodoxy; his accommodations all tell of personal surrender to the religious reaction of the time. His is finally a pathological case, his pietism being clearly a reversion, in his opium period, to the inculcated religious emotions of his childhood, with an adult mind to give them philosophic form.

Those who found in his dialectic a sanction for continued profession of the Christian faith were either, like Edward Irving, mystical religionists whose reasoning was always in terms of blindly accepted dogmas, or mystical philosophers bent on somehow squaring dogma and legend with philosophic forms of statement. In no case will the assimilation bear critical scrutiny. The old device of a modal Trinity, assigning to Omnipotence the need for "communication," is by Coleridge re-formulated in terms of German philosophy, with no semblance of organic relation to the Christian creed. The method might have been applied with the same measure of validity to any polytheistic system.

On the philosophic side Coleridge is anchored to the verbalism of what Carlyle called the "hocus-pocus of Reason and Understanding," which merely confuses the problems of psychology and logic; and on the religious side to the strategy of warning the doubter that if he gives up dogma A he will have to give up *seriatim* immortality and ethics, with theism. (Samples of his method of menace are given in the author's essay on him in *New Essays towards a Critical Method.*) His analytical insight is constantly colliding with the creed he had undertaken to vindicate, and suffering accordingly. (Cp. Benn, i, 248–55, 259–63.) The verdicts "weak and shuffling," "habitual reticence and equivocation" (*id.* pp. 246, 272), are only too abundantly justified by his many incongruous writings.

It seems to be true, nevertheless, that Coleridge (his literary prestige aiding his philosophic status) exercised a leavening and fermenting influence on relatively progressive minds in general for more than a generation after his death. He "was essentially a heretic, believing or disbelieving just what he chose, and just as much as he chose." (*Id.* p. 275.) Heretical utterances abound in his *Notes on the English Divines.* While he thus repelled Newman, and himself recoiled from the distracted illuminism of his pupil Irving, it is claimed that he "was in fact the real founder of.....the

Broad Church"—Arnold, Hare, Thirlwall, Maurice, and John Sterling being all either his disciples or his admirers, and their tradition being carried on by Stanley, Jowett, Kingsley, and Robertson of Brighton. (*Id.* p. 282.)

Professor Goldwin Smith, on the other hand, in his semi-orthodox stage (1861), held that "Coleridge rather than Butler has been the anchor by which the intellect of England has ridden out, so far as it has ridden out, the storms of this tempestuous age"; and the elder Sir James Stephen reassured his doubting eldest son with a reference to "Coleridge and other wise men" as having "made a satisfactory apology for the Bible." The conception of the spineless Coleridge as an "anchor" is a revelation of the power of "rhetoric turned into logic." He was simply the first of the influential religious rhapsodes in the England of the nineteenth century, comparing in this respect with Lamennais, Chateaubriand, and Schleiermacher.

Coleridge is finally to be realized in terms of his physio-psychology—an interpretation delayed by the resistance of literary men in general to physiological solutions. His own accounts of his childhood show him abnormally responsive to all impressions on his imagination, the faculty in respect of which he became a poet. With this responsiveness was bound up his confessed subjection to his environment for the time being. An admiring biographer (Turnbull, *Biographia Epistolaris*, ii, 137) has noted how "in the presence of Cottle and Wade, of an evangelical tone of mind, Coleridge humiliated himself and wrote penitential letters," while holding quite a different tone to others.

In the same fashion he wrote and talked in an "advanced" tone to the freethinking Allsop, who revered and financially assisted him. His substantial capitulation to pietism is visibly a surrender to the consciousness of moral weakness which grew upon him in his opium period; and he is pious in harmony with the Gilmans, who earned his affection. It is very probable that had he been in the society of cultured Catholics who showed him the same protecting affection he could have come round to the Catholicism of which he spoke in such terms of aversion (*Anima Poetae*, pp. 62, 124). All his solutions being in terms of surrender to feeling—despite his express repudiation of the principle—he could have taken the way of Newman with little difficulty.

3. On another side, Sir Walter Scott's honest but unintellectual romanticism, as we know from Newman, certainly favoured the Tractarian reaction, to which it was æsthetically though hardly emotionally akin. Yet George Eliot could say in later life that it was the influence of Scott that first unsettled her orthodoxy;[1] meaning, doubtless, that

[1] Leslie Stephen, *George Eliot*, p. 27.

the prevailing secularity of his view of life and his objective handling of sects and faiths excluded even a theistic solution. Scott's orthodoxy was in truth nearly on all fours with his Jacobitism—a matter of temperamental loyalty to a tradition. But the more potent influence of Byron, too wayward to hold a firm philosophy, but too intensely alive to realities to be capable of Scott's feudal orthodoxy, must have counted for heresy even in England, and was one of the literary forces of revolutionary revival for the whole of Europe.

Mr. Benn (*Hist. of Eng. Rationalism*, i, 226, 309 *sq.*) has some interesting discussions on Scott's relation to religion, but does not take full account of biographical data and of Scott's utterances outside of his novels. The truth probably is that Scott's brain was one with "watertight compartments." In a letter to Lockhart, àpropos of the 'Religious Discourses' which he wrote to help financially a young man in whom he was interested, he protests: "I would, if called upon, die a martyr for the Christian religion, so completely is (in my poor opinion) its divine origin proved by its beneficial effects on the state of society. Were we but to name the abolition of slavery and polygamy, how much has, in these two words, been granted to mankind in the lessons of our Saviour" (Jan. 10, 1828: ch. 75 of *Life*, 1-vol. ed. p. 678). This utilitarian form of faith, with its historical-novel sociology, certainly does not tell of evangelical piety. On the other hand, he expresses in 1824 a great dislike of an "enthusiasm in religion" which reacts on politics. This spirit, he says, "while it has abandoned the lower classes.....has transferred itself to the upper classes," disuniting families, and teaching "a new way of going to the Devil for God's sake." (Letter to Lord Montagu: *Life*, ch. 60, p. 523.) Scott's early deflection from Presbyterianism to Episcopalianism tells, again, rather of æsthetic than of religious bias.

4. It makes a quaint impression, ethically speaking, to read that Moore and others of Byron's friends were disquieted by a fear that Shelley in Italy would have a bad influence on him by undermining his religious opinions. About his morals they seem to have been undisturbed. Shelley never really persuaded Byron out of his semi-political "Christianity," which amounted to a belief that men "needed" a religion of some sort. In *Julian and Maddalo* we can hear them arguing. But Byron's *Cain*, which, apart from his satire, is his most direct contribution to revolutionary thinking in religion, was extolled by Shelley, in terms which now make the impression of absurd hyperbole,[1] as an "immortal work"; and Byron agreed in 1821 to write a biographical preface to a translation of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* by Shelley and Williams—a scheme which was never fulfilled.[2]

It may be questioned whether the moral disrepute of both Shelley and

[1] Dowden, ii, 448-49. [2] *Id.* p. 138.

Byron did not go as far to keep freethought ostracized in their day as to help it. When Shelley propounded his strange ideal of incest (adopted from J. H. Lawrence's romance of *The Kingdom of the Nairs*, 1811, in *Laon and Cythna*, the first form of *The Revolt of Islam*) he added a new ground for the charge of Satanism which was levelled at him by J. T. Coleridge in the *Quarterly Review* on the occasion of the reprint of *Queen Mab*. The outrageous teaching of the *Laon* poem, never defended by argument, was never retracted by the poet, and was only reluctantly excised by him from *The Revolt*. It has been generally ignored by Shelley worshippers, though worthily criticized and censured by some. But it belongs to the period when his brain was seething with à priori revolutionism, and when the Bolshevism of Godwin's *Political Justice*, formulated *in vacuo* without the slightest regard to the practical science of social life, served to elicit in him every kind of headlong speculation. Later he lost many illusions. Byron, with his really lower ideals and distinctly lower practice, had a kind of hold on social reality which Shelley lacked, and always had affinities with social and religious orthodoxy.

Byron's religious beliefs were much canvassed after his death. Medwin, Moore, and Galt all discuss them at length; and a Dr. Kennedy, who held long conversations on religion with Byron at Cephalonia, published an account of them, which is summarized by Galt (*Life of Byron*, 1830, ch. xiiii). The low opinion of Kennedy's capacity formed by the orthodox Galt will not be dissented from by any rationalist. He demanded from his victims a twelve hours' audience, which, he complains, was not maintained. Despite the folly of his instructor, Byron listened with much patience, declaring himself a believer in God and willing to be convinced of the truth of Christianity; but unable to see the need for a Saviour in view of the doctrine of foreordination, which he accepted.

Galt's own opinion (p. 281) was that Byron "had but loose feelings in religion—scarcely any"; and, for the rest, proceeded always from his feelings—a proposition not reconcilable with Byron's insistence on foreordination. Medwin, a bad witness, was "inclined to think that if he were occasionally sceptical.....yet his wavering never amounted to a disbelief in the divine Founder of Christianity" (*Conversations of Lord Byron*, 1824, i, 74).

The sayings cited indicate only an unwillingness to take up a definitely negative position. Moore goes further, describing him (*Life*, ch. vi) as a "sceptic" at college, though professing deism (letter to Dallas, Jan. 21, 1808). But Shelley, in a letter of 1822, commenting on one in which the sentimentally pious Moore had expressed a dread of Shelley's influence over Byron, declares that if he had any such influence he "certainly should employ it to eradicate from his [Byron's] great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush

for the hours of sickness and distress" (Moore's *Life of Byron*, 1-vol. ed. 1838, p. 554, *note*. Shelley in another letter wrote: "delusions, especially the gross and preposterous ones of the existing religion." Dowden, ii, 508).

Though he never came to even a partly clear decision as did Shelley,[1] and often in private gave himself out for a Calvinist, he so handled theological problems in his *Cain* that he, like Shelley, was refused copyright in his work;[2] and it was widely appropriated for freethinkers' purposes. The orthodox Southey was on the same grounds denied, in 1821, the right to suppress his early revolutionary drama, *Wat Tyler*, which accordingly was made to do duty in Radical propaganda by freethinking publishers. Keats, again, though he melodiously declaimed, in a boyish mood, against the scientific analysis of the rainbow, and though he never assented to Shelley's impeachments of Christianity, was in no active sense a believer in it, and after his long sickness met death gladly without the "consolations" ascribed to creed.[3] Thus not one of the five chief English poets of that age was a "sound Christian," though the faith could claim Southey and Moore. Blake, the independent mystic, is outside the classes of Rationalist and Christian alike.

5. It is indeed difficult to find any English writer in the category of genius, apart from Scott, who in that half century of maximum orthodoxy can be pronounced an orthodox Christian believer. Rogers, with his calculated conformity, cannot be so described. Campbell's views on religion were "vague"; and he privately disavowed belief in personal immortality,[4] here outgoing Paine in freethinking. Walter Savage Landor, the correspondent of Wordsworth and the attached friend of Southey, was yet far from being a docile Christian. To Wordsworth (1823) he avowed that he was "disgusted with all books that treat of religion";[5] and to Southey:—

> In regard to prayer, if ever I prayed at all, I would not transgress or exceed the order of Jesus Christ. In my opinion all Christianity (as priests call their inventions) is to be rejected, excepting His own commands.....His immediate followers were, for the greater part, as hot-headed fanatics as Whitfield and Wesley, and probably no less ambitious. These however are truths I would not propagate; for it is false that all truth is *always* good..... To increase the sum of happiness, and to diminish the sum of misery, is the only right aim both of reason and religion. All superstition tends to remove something from morality, and to substitute something in its place, and is therefore no less a wrong to sound probity than to sound sense.[6]

[1] At the age of twenty-five we find him writing to Gifford: "I am no bigot to infidelity, and did not expect that because I doubted the immortality of man I should be charged with denying the existence of God" (letter of June 18, 1813).

[2] By the Court of Chancery in 1822, the year in which copyright was refused to the *Lectures* of Lawrence (Harriet Martineau, *History of the Peace*, ii, 87).

[3] W. Sharp, *Life of Severn*, 1892, pp. 86–7, 90, 117–18.

[4] *Threescore Years and Ten: Reminiscences of Mrs. S. E. De Morgan*, 1895, pp. 117–19.

[5] John Forster, *Walter Savage Landor: A Biography*, 1869, ii, 26. [6] *Id.* p. 22.

6. The last writer of the age into whose environment one might expect rationalist influences to penetrate would be Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855), the gifted and popular author of *Our Village* (1824–32), whose first literary efforts had been in conventional verse. Yet in 1829 we find her writing to her friend, the Rev. William Harness, "to confess, what I think you must suspect, although by no chance do I ever talk about it—that I do not, or rather cannot, believe all that the Church requires. I humbly hope that it is not necessary to do so.....I occasion no scandal either by opinions or by conduct. The clergyman of our parish and his family are my most intimate friends."[1] She seems to have been a Unitarian. Near the end of her life we find her "accepting the whole of the holy mystery as I find it," relying on "the mercy of God," albeit not quite confidently,[2] poor lady.

7. One of the best-beloved names in English literature, Charles Lamb, is on several counts to be numbered with those of the freethinkers of his day—who included Godwin and Hunt and Hazlitt—though he had no part in any direct propaganda. Himself at most a Unitarian, but not at all given to argument on points of faith, he did his work for reason partly by way of the subtle and winning humanism of such an essay as *New Year's Eve*, which seems to have been what brought upon him the pedantically pious censure of Southey, as it did the solemn blame of various wiseacres, for its lack of allusion to a future state; partly by his delicately-entitled letter, *The Tombs in the Abbey*, in which he replied to Southey's stricture. "A book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original" had been Southey's pompous criticism, in a paper on *Infidelity*,[3] in which he basely sought to wound Leigh Hunt in respect of a domestic sorrow. In his reply Lamb commented on Southey's life-long habit of scoffing at the Church of Rome, and gravely repudiated the test of orthodoxy for human character.

> Lamb's words are not generally known, and are worth remembering. "I own," he wrote, "I could never think so considerably of myself as to decline the society of an agreeable or worthy man upon difference of opinion only. The impediments and the facilitations to

[1] *Life*, edited by Rev. A. G. Lestrange, 2nd ed. 1870, ii, 264–5.
[2] *Id.* iii, 289–91.
[3] On reading Lamb's severe rejoinder, Southey, in distress, apologized, and Lamb at once relented (*Life and Letters of John Rickman*, by Orlo Williams, 1912, p. 225). Hence the curtailment of Lamb's letter in the ordinary editions of his works. But Lamb's impulsive generosity must not be allowed to carry a condemnation of himself. Mr. E. V. Lucas, in his excellent *Life* (5th ed. 1921, ii, 628), censures Lamb because Southey's attack on Hunt had been "sincere." It does not occur to Mr. Lucas that Lamb had been quite as sincere as Southey; and Hunt as sincere as either. Southey is freely pardoned for an essentially base blow: all the freethinkers are to be dismissed with a warning. This kind of confusion of critical justice is one of the illustrations of the clouding effects of orthodoxy. The best that can be said for Southey is that he was made ashamed. But he never said so, as to his blow at Hunt. In him, religion was the co-efficient of self-righteousness.

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a sound belief are various and inscrutable as the heart of man. Some believe upon weak principles; others cannot feel the efficacy of the strongest. One of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men I ever knew was the late Thomas Holcroft. I believe he never said one thing and meant another in his life; and, as near as I can guess, he never acted otherwise than with the most scrupulous attention to conscience. Ought we to wish the character false for the sake of a hollow compliment to Christianity?" Of the free-thinking and unpopular Hazlitt, who had soured towards Lamb in his perverse way, the essayist spoke still more generously. Of Leigh Hunt he speaks more critically, though with the same resolution to stand by a man known as a heretic. But the severest flout to Southey and his Church is in the next paragraph, where, after the avowal that "the last sect with which you can remember me to have made common profession were the Unitarians," he tells how, on the previous Easter Sunday, he had attended the service in Westminster Abbey, and, when he would have lingered afterwards among the tombs to meditate, was "turned, like a dog or some profane person, out into the common street, with feelings which I could not help, but not very congenial to the day or the discourse. I do not know," he adds, "that I shall ever venture myself again into one of your churches."

These words were published in the *London Magazine* in 1823; but in the posthumous collected edition of the *Essays of Elia* all the portions above cited were dropped, and the paragraph just quoted from was modified, leaving out the last words. The essay does not seem to have been reprinted in full till it appeared in R. H. Shepherd's edition of 1878. But the original issue in the *London Magazine* created a tradition among the lovers of Lamb, and his name has always been associated with some repute for freethinking. His letter to Walter Wilson (Aug. 14, 1801) avows that the religious mood, natural at the time of his sister's tragedy, had practically passed from him; and Crabb Robinson (*Diary*, 1824, March 5) writes that "C. L.'s impressions against religion are unaccountably strong." There is further very important testimony as to Lamb's opinions in one of Allsop's records of the conversation of Coleridge:—

"No, no; Lamb's scepticism has not come lightly, nor is he a sceptic [*sic*: Query, *scoffer?*]. The harsh reproof to Godwin for his contemptuous allusion to Christ before a well-trained child proves that he is not a sceptic [? scoffer]." [On *this* point there is room for doubt as to Coleridge's accuracy. In Godwin's posthumous Essays Jesus is spoken of panegyrically; and Godwin seems to have given such a lead to Shelley.] "His mind, never prone to analysis, seems to have been disgusted with the hollow pretences, the false reasonings and absurdities of the rogues and fools with whom all

establishments, and all creeds seeking to become established, abound. I look upon Lamb as one hovering between earth and heaven ; neither hoping much nor fearing anything. It is curious that he should retain many usages which he learnt or adopted in the fervour of his early religious feelings, now that his faith is in a state of suspended animation. Believe me, who know him well, that Lamb, say what he will, has more of the *essentials* of Christianity than ninety-nine out of a hundred professing Christians. He has all that would still have been Christian had Christ never lived or been made manifest upon earth." (Allsop's *Letters*, etc., as cited, p. 46.) In connection with the frequently cited anecdote as to Lamb's religious feeling given in Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* (rep. p. 253), also by Hazlitt (*Winterslow*, essay ii, ed. 1902, p. 39), may be noted not only his early protest (letter to Coleridge, Oct. 24, 1796) that to make Jesus a God is idolatry, but the following, given by Allsop : "After a visit to Coleridge, during which the conversation had taken a religious turn, Leigh Hunt.....expressed his surprise that such a man as Coleridge should, when speaking of Christ, always call him Our Saviour. Lamb, who had been exhilarated by one glass of that gooseberry or raisin cordial which he has so often anathematized, stammered out : 'Ne-ne-never mind what Coleridge says ; he is full of fun.'" If the levity pains the Christian reader, the rationalist has a similar sensation from Lamb's remark, in 1822, that "Shelley the great Atheist has gone down by water to eternal fire." (Letter to Barron Field, Sep. 22, 1822—not to Barton, as Mr. Lucas inadvertently writes.) Lamb's balanced judgment on Shelley is given in his letter to Barton, August, 1824.

8. While a semi-Bohemian like Lamb could thus dare to challenge the reigning bigotry, the graver English writers of the first half of the century who had abandoned or never accepted orthodoxy felt themselves for the most part compelled to silence or ostensible compliance. It was made clear by Carlyle's posthumous *Reminiscences* that he had early turned away from Christian dogma, having in fact given up a clerical career because of unbelief. Later evidence abounds. At the age of fifteen, by his own account, he had horrified his mother with the question : "Did God Almighty come down and make wheelbarrows in a shop?"[1] Of his college life he told : "I studied the evidences of Christianity for several years, with the greatest desire to be convinced, but in vain. I read Gibbon, and then first clearly saw that Christianity was not true. Then came the most trying time of my life."[2] Goethe, he claimed, led him to peace ; but philosophic peace he never attained. "He was contemptuous to those who held to Christian dogmas ; he was angry with those who gave them up ; he was furious with those who attacked him

[1] *William Allingham : A Diary*, 1907, p. 253. Cp. p. 268. [2] *Id.* p. 232.

[*read* them]. If equanimity be the mark of a Philosopher, he was of all great-minded men the least of a Philosopher."[1]

For many, indeed, Carlyle was in his own way a disintegrator of orthodoxy. The *Sartor Resartus* told of pantheism rather than of Christianity; and the essay on Voltaire embodied some liberal thinking, albeit with much hedging. But, as the general atmosphere lightened, Carlyle rather retrogressed than advanced, despite private fulminations against the Church of England and growls over the need for an "exodus from Houndsditch"—i.e., from Hebraic religion. He counted for stimulus to more earnest thinking on the problems of life; but he was much more zealous in glorification of the fanaticism of the Cromwellian Puritans, on which even Hallam had spoken with force, than for any new thinking. It is a persistent error on the part of his partisans to refuse to look at the facts all round.

To all freethinking work, scholarly or other, he was hostile with the hostility of a man consciously in a false position. Grote's 'History of Greece' he called "a fetid quagmire, with nothing spiritual about it."[2] Strauss's *Leben Jesu* he pronounced, quite late in life, "a revolutionary and ill-advised enterprise, setting forth in words what all wise men had had in their minds for fifty years past, and thought it fittest to hold their peace about."[3] He was, in fact, so false to his own doctrine of veracity as to disparage all who spoke out, while privately agreeing with Mill as to the need for speaking out.[4] Even Mill did so only partially in his lifetime, as in his address to the St. Andrews students (1867), when, "in the reception given to the Address, he was most struck by the vociferous applause of the divinity students at the freethought passage."[5] In the first half of the century such displays of courage were rare indeed. Only after the death of Romilly was it tacitly avowed, by the publication of a deistic prayer found among his papers, that he had had no belief in revelation.[6] Much later in the century Harriet Martineau, for openly avowing her unbelief, incurred the public censure of her own brother.

9. In the United States, Emerson, known to have left the Unitarian pulpit (1832) for deficiency in the dogmatic orthodoxy even of that curtailed creed, gradually won a far-reaching influence as promoting a "liberal" heterodoxy against a sacerdotalism and a bigotry no less marked than those of the mother country. And that influence became potent there also. Temperamentally, Emerson was a freethinker in a high degree; and the fact that he remained also temperamentally a loose

[1] Allingham, as cited, p. 254.
[2] *Life of Darwin*, ed. 1888, i, 77.
[3] Allingham, p. 211. Carlyle said the same thing to Moncure Conway.
[4] Cp. Prof. Bain's *J. S. Mill*, pp. 157, 191; Froude's *London Life of Carlyle*, i, 458.
[5] Bain, p. 128.
[6] See Brougham's letters in the *Correspondence of Macvey Napier*, 1879, pp. 333–7. Brougham is deeply indignant, not at the fact, but at the indiscreet revelation of it—as also at the similar revelation concerning Pitt (p. 334).

thinker was no bar to his influence over the uncritical majority of open-minded people. It kept him always a "belletrist" rather than a reasoner, writing as he did sententious prose in the spirit of poetry; and he retained the prestige and privilege of *belles lettres* while dealing with questions of religion, philosophy, and science. He was thus inspiring and educative where rigorous criticism and close thinking made small appeal.

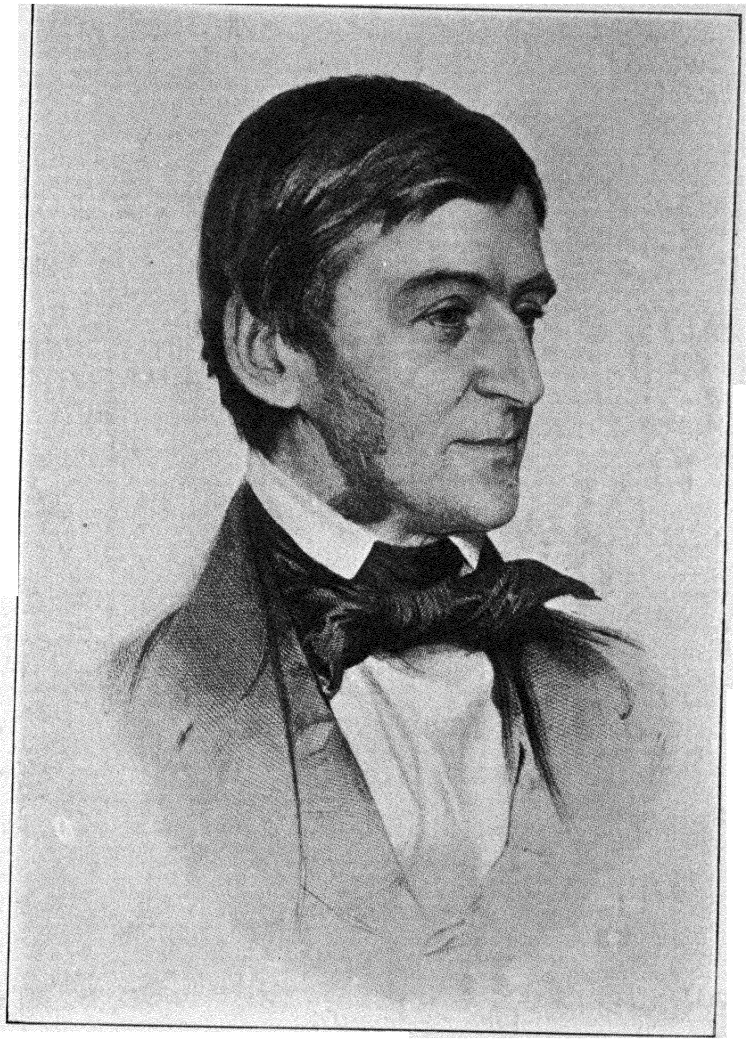
From the first he disavowed debate. Challenged by his friendly Unitarian colleague to justify his heretical position on the Sacrament, he replied:—

> There is no scholar less willing or less able than myself to be a polemic. I could not give an account of myself if challenged. I could not possibly give you one of the arguments you cruelly hint at. For I do not know what arguments are in reference to any expression of a thought. I delight in telling what I think; but if you ask me why I dare say so, or why it is so, I am the most helpless of mortal men.[1]

Thus he had the defects of his qualities; and against his persuasive influence is to be set his unsatisfying relation to men who craved for argument and logic. For them, reason is the supreme persuasive; and to be told by him that he cared nothing for consistency was for some a bar to sympathy. Like Coleridge, he had caught up the Kantian dichotomy of Reason and Understanding, always playing with it to the end of treating reason as intuitive vision of truth, even when he is indicating that it is the second thought as against the first. His theism can be seen as simple inherited psychic habit—a clerical atavism. But on a balance his influence was eminently liberative, anti-dogmatic, progressive, alike in his own country and in England. His pantheism was as incoherent as anybody else's; but his incidental stimuli to self-liberation from routine thinking were of singular value. He was one of the first to appreciate *Sartor Resartus*, for which he won American vogue before it had any in Britain; and in his lectures to young men at American colleges, in the 'thirties, he stirred a spirit then little cherished in the land of democracy, where political freedom did not mean freedom of thought.

"Be content with a little light," he told them, "so it be your own. Explore, and explore, and explore. Be neither chided not flattered out of your position of perpetual inquiry."[2] And when he dropped the thought that "As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect,"[3] he struck deeper than his pantheism. The philosophic development of such a thought would indeed have dismissed the whole theistic presupposition; but to have attempted such a proceeding—of which he was structurally incapable—would have closed to him many ears that, as it was, listened. To the last he found friendly

[1] Cited in '*In Memoriam:* Ralph Waldo Emerson,' by Alexander Ireland, 1882, p. 6.
[2] Oration at Dartmouth College, July, 1838.
[3] Essays, *Self-Reliance*, Bohn ed. p. 33.



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hearers where systematic rationalism could not penetrate. "He has, in fact, propounded no system. He is called a Transcendentalist; but he never adopted the name."[1]

Personally, while always deprecating debate, he was aloof from all forms of specific religious doctrine, and privately he avowed repulsions which he never allowed himself to confess in public. "I cannot feel interested in Christianity," he told Moncure Conway in 1853; "it seems deplorable that there should be a tendency to creeds that would take men back to the chimpanzee."[2] "While he could not personally attend any church, he held a pew in the Unitarian church for his wife and children, who desired it, and indeed would in any case support the minister"—for social and civic purposes. Thus the most eminent name in American literature for the last age stands outside of all organized creed.

10. In England his influence was always associated with that of Carlyle, to which it lent a surplus reputation for cryptic heresy. Despite his anxious caution, as we have seen, Carlyle's writings conveyed to susceptible readers a non-Christian view of things. We know from a posthumous writing of Froude's that, when that writer had gone through the university and taken holy orders without ever having had a single doubt as to his creed, Carlyle's books "taught him that the religion in which he had been reared was but one of many dresses in which spiritual truth had arrayed itself, and that the creed was not literally true so far as it was a narrative of facts."[3] It was presumably from the *Sartor Resartus*, the *Life of Sterling*, and some of the Essays, such as that on Voltaire—perhaps, also, negatively from the general absence of Christian sentiment in Carlyle's works—that such lessons were learned; and though it is certain that many non-zealous Christians saw no harm in Carlyle, there is reason to believe that for multitudes of readers he had an awakening virtue.

The old attitude of orthodoxy, threatening ostracism to any avowed freethinker who had a position to lose, must be kept in mind in estimating the English evolution of that time. A professed man of science could write in 1838 that "the new mode of interpreting the Scriptures which has sprung up in Germany is the darkest cloud which lowers upon the horizon of that country.....The Germans have been conducted by some of their teachers to the borders of a precipice, one leap from which will plunge them into deism." He added that in various parts of Europe "the heaviest calamity impending over the whole fabric of society in our time is the lengthening stride of bold scepticism in some parts, and the more stealthy onwards-creeping step of critical cavil in others."[4] Such

[1] Ireland, as cited, p. 39.

[2] *Autobiography: Memories and Experiences*, by Moncure Daniel Conway, 1904, i, 123.

[3] *My Relations with Carlyle*, 1903, p. 2.

[4] *Germany*, by Bisset Hawkins, M.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.P., Inspector of Prisons, late Professor at King's College, etc., 1838, p. 171.

declamation could terrorize the timid and constrain the prudent in such a society as that of early Victorian England. The prevailing note is struck in Macaulay's description of Charles Blount as "an infidel, and the head of a small school of infidels who were troubled with a morbid desire to make converts."[1] All the while Macaulay, as can be seen from his notes on Middleton,[2] was himself privately "infidel";[3] but he cleared his conscience by thus denouncing those who had the courage of their opinions. In this simple fashion some of the sanest writers in history were complacently put below the level of the commonplace dissemblers who aspersed them; and the average educated man saw no baseness in the procedure.

The opinion deliberately expressed in this connection by the late Professor Bain is worth noting:—

"It can at last be clearly seen what was the motive of Carlyle's perplexing style of composition. We now know what his opinions were when he began to write, and that to express them would have been fatal to his success; yet he was not a man to indulge in rank hypocrisy. He accordingly adopted a studied and ambiguous phraseology, which for long imposed upon the religious public, who put their own interpretation upon his mystical utterances,[4] and gave him the benefit of any doubt. In the *Life of Sterling* he threw off the mask, but still was not taken at his word. Had there been a perfect tolerance of all opinions, he would have begun as he ended; and his strain of composition, while still mystical and high-flown, would never have been identified with our national orthodoxy.

"I have grave doubts as to whether we possess Macaulay's real opinions on religion. His way of dealing with the subject is so like the hedging of an unbeliever that, without some good assurance to the contrary, I must include him also among the imitators of Aristotle's 'caution.'.....

"When Sir Charles Lyell brought out his *Antiquity of Man*, he too was cautious. Knowing the dangers of his footing, he abstained from giving an estimate of the extension of time required by the evidences of human remains. Society in London, however, would not put up with this reticence, and he had to disclose at dinner

[1] *History*, ch. xix. Student's ed. ii, 411. [2] Trevelyan's *Life*, ed. 1908, p. 675.

[3] Sometimes he gives a clue; and we find Brougham privately denouncing him for his remark (Essay on *Ranke's History of the Popes*, 6th par.) that to try "without the help of revelation to prove the immortality of man" is vain. "It is next thing to preaching atheism," shouts Brougham (letter of October 20, 1840, in *Correspondence of Macvey Napier*, p. 333), who at the same time hotly insisted that Cuvier had made an advance in Natural Theology by proving that there must have been *one* divine interposition after the creation of the world—to create species. (*Id.* p. 337.) Brougham, as we shall see, was himself under suspicion of "infidel" Deism.

[4] Thus Carlyle's picture of the "two ghastly phantoms, Hypocrisy and Atheism," was commonly understood to refer to atheistic doctrine; whereas it was an imputation of "practical" atheism to ordinary churchgoers.

parties what he had withheld from the public—namely, that in his opinion the duration of man could not be less than 50,000 years" (*Practical Essays*, p. 274).

11. That disclosure effectively raises for us the question of the decisive part played by the physical sciences in modern freethought. In 1851 an English Conservative, William Johnston, barrister-at-law, produced a book in two volumes, on 'England as It Is, Political, Social, and Industrial, in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century,' in the course of which, as a good churchman, he comments on the new vogue of physical science. Unnecessarily explaining that he dislikes all *liberalism*, in an earnest conviction that "the doctrines of *liberalism* are directly adverse to the happiness of the great bulk of the population," he avows also much dislike of all "utilitarian airs."[1] Nevertheless he defends the Church of England expressly on the ground, not of any service to truth, but of its social utility.[2]

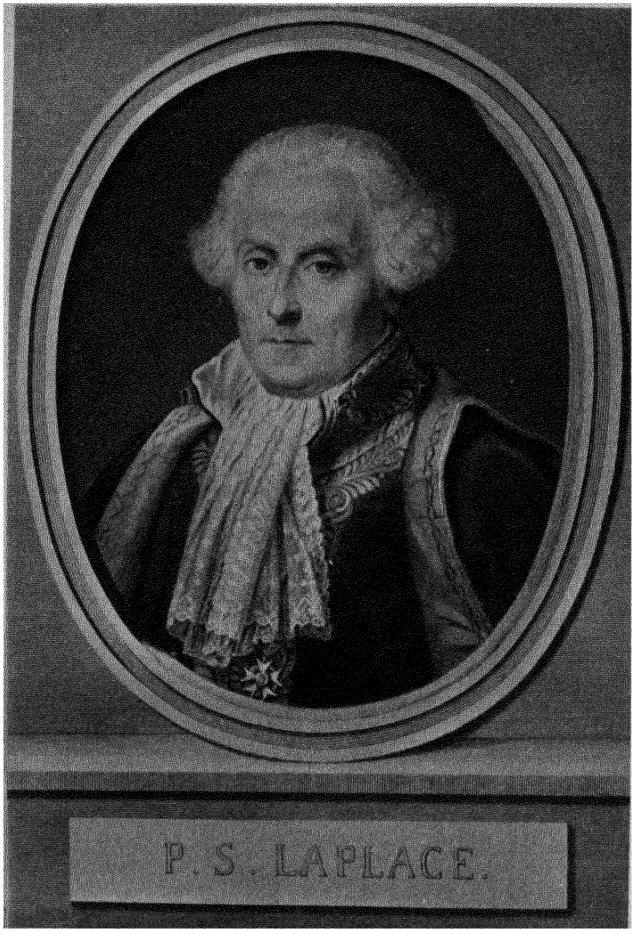
Coming to "modern science," he complains that its platform propagandists do not sufficiently concern themselves to set forth what will be "of use" to their audiences.[3] But he concedes the historic fact that the sciences *are* being broadcast in a fashion previously unexampled in England.[4] Whereas forty years before, "in the days of Sir Humphry Davy's triumphs, there was doubtless a great deal of scientific affectation in the fashionable world, and carriage company crowded to the Royal Institution," so "they do now, to listen to his scarcely less-gifted successor" —Faraday. But whereas in Davy's day the contagion hardly extended beyond the fashionable world, "Not so now. Every district of the town must have its scientific institute, and every suburb its courses of lectures."

The learned reporter has the gratification of being able to state that these undertakings do not always flourish long; but he confesses the general proclivity. "The general faith in science as a wonder-worker is at present unlimited."[5] Our conclusion is that between suburban lecture courses and Mechanics' Institutes the middle and lower-middle and working classes were being newly indoctrinated with scientific ideas of many kinds, thus beginning incidentally to emerge from the theological half-century of reaction. The same thing had happened in France before the Revolution.[6] But the good churchman, with his anti-utilitarian concern for utility, does not intransigently protest. He is convinced that political economy makes men selfish and unsocial,[7] but he is prepared to tolerate science if only its teachers will tell people what is useful to them.[8] Science impassively proceeded, soon achieving in its march things which he had not even dreamed of dreading. For the new knowledge was doing something more than supplying data: it was developing in the general intelligence a new standard of truth.

[1] Work cited, vol. ii, p. 96. [2] *Id.* ii, 1–3. [3] *Id.* i, 245, 249, 263.
[4] *Id.* p. 244. [5] *Id.* i, 245.
[6] See Buckle's *Introduction to the History of Civilization in England*, Routledge's ed. pp. 493–4. [7] Johnston, i, 259. [8] *Id.* i, 251.

And this meant more than a direct confrontation of religious untruth with a veridical testimony, the fiction of dogma with the truth "wrung from Nature's close reserve." It was to mean the rise of a new critical temper, armed not merely against the menace of creed but against the didactic fulminations of the new prophets in prose and verse, the Coleridges and Carlyles, the Tennysons and Brownings, who delivered to men their quasi-intuitive interpretations of the universe with all the certitude of ancient seers, and with an *aura* of genius which duly hypnotized multitudes for whom theistic belief of some kind was a psychic heritage not to be shaken off. Out of the new science, forming a basis for a new outlook on the cosmos, was to grow a new standard of authority, the code of minds which had realized that truth is the outcome of "the general deed of man," and not the discovery of any gifted egotist "who comes blowing his voluntary smoke-wreaths, and pretending to decide things from out of his private dream."[1]

[1] William James, *The Will to Believe*, 1897, p. 7.



P. S. LAPLACE

Chapter V

THE NATURAL SCIENCES, BEFORE DARWIN

§ 1. *The Religious Environment*

For most sound intelligences, probably, the force or fulcrum serving to disintegrate and reconstruct their mental formulation of life and the universe, as against the now suspected lore made sacrosanct from antiquity, is the exact study of natural phenomena. The modern world found itself, a century or two ago, solemnly assured, by a consensus of social and ecclesiastical authorities, that the universe and man had been constructed in the fashion related at the beginning of Genesis; that the influence of "the serpent" on Eve had caused the lapse of mankind into a state of sin, involving eternal perdition for all save Jews; and that after a few thousand years that situation was permanently altered by the crucifixion of Jesus, whereby Omnipotence was placated, and future "salvation" was made possible to all properly repentant believers in the whole miraculous record.

For instructed people to-day, as has been hinted by an eminent Bishop, the doctrine is intellectually on a level with the theologies of Mexico and Polynesia; and even many churchgoers have reached a stage at which they indignantly deny that "Christianity" means these things, never asking when and how it began to mean what they think they believe. But a hundred years ago the Church of England and the Church of Rome alike taught that it meant these things; and an explicit denial of them as absurd mythology would have caused myriads of well-nurtured people to turn pale with terror. Scholars knew that certain early Fathers regarded the story in Genesis as allegory; and a considerable number of relatively strong-minded persons, within and without the Church, either shelved it in that fashion while adhering confusedly to the "Christian scheme," or tacitly dismissed the whole matter as superstition and priestcraft. But publicly to talk common-sense on the subject was to be scouted for "infidelity," with, in many cases, the result of pecuniary loss through ostracism.

The assimilation of scientific anthropology has now led a number of facile thinkers (who can in a fashion quote Huxley for their position) to decide that there never was "any such thing as priestcraft"—a new scientific confusion. Priestcraft can be seen through a hundred histories, by men who can read history, to be a standing concomitant of

religion,[1] equally with the sincere fanaticism of many priests. In Britain, a century ago, there was an abundance of both, with laymen abetting equally the priestcraft and the fanaticism. It has taken a hundred years of prevarication and compromise to bring about the state of things in which the growing body of rationally active minds confront an ecclesiasticism which still talks vaguely of revelation, while receding from "Revelation."

Over a century ago Elias Hicks, a prominent Quaker preacher at New York, asked: "Is it possible that there is any person so ignorant or so superstitious as to believe that there ever was on earth such a place as the Garden of Eden, or that Adam and Eve were really put into it and turned out of it for eating an apple? My friends, it is all an allegory." Since the century has been turned a prominent Conservative politician in England felt himself, and was felt by his friends, to be speaking rather boldly when he put in print the same suggestion.[2] Students know, however, that what is thus termed "allegory" is just primary myth, the construction of primitive ignorance. The use of the term "allegory," natural to Hicks, is now in that connection a *suggestio falsi*, unless we are to regard all the mythology of Genesis as consciously invented by "priestcraft."

Hicks's compromise, however, is a reminder of the "inevitability of gradualness" in all mental reconstruction for men in general. Paine, vehemently convinced of the sheer absurdity of the Christian system, in the face of the modernly conceived universe, remained (perhaps not to the last) as firmly convinced that he could adjust that infinite universe to his theism, and adhered to the religious conception of a future state. "My own opinion is," he wrote in his latter years, "that those whose lives have been spent in doing good and endeavouring to make their fellow mortals happy—for this is the only way in which we can serve God—*will be happy hereafter;* and that the very wicked will meet with some punishment. That is my opinion. It is consistent with my ideas of God's justice, and with the reason that God has given me."[3]

Such was the *credo* of the man hated and aspersed by millions of Christians as "infidel," and still known to many educated Americans, in the devout language of President Roosevelt, as "a dirty little atheist." And it must have been largely by such intelligences as Paine's, introspectively unphilosophical yet keenly vigilant on the world and its concrete

[1] "Thus, as early as 1901, my experience consisted in what I had ascertained and was ascertaining—viz., 'the organization of pious fraud' everywhere and always, in the present as in the past, in the ancient history of the Church as in its contemporary history" (*The Life of a Priest: My Own Experience*, by Albert Houtin, Eng. trans. 1927, p. 185).

[2] In 1928 the position is no longer counted audacious.

[3] *My Private Thoughts on a Future State*, in Collected Works. There are variant readings. In one of these, "some punishment" is followed by: "But those who are neither good nor bad, or are too insignificant for notice, will be dropt entirely."

problems, that there was slowly built up the structure of tested science which, broadly speaking, now stands between the general mind and any reversion to the theology of Polynesia. There was never any sudden irruption of "pure reason" in the general thought. All that has taken place is a process of explorative ratiocination. Reason is but a matter of re-thinking.

§ 2. *Astronomy*

1. The power of habit and tradition had preserved among the majority of educated men and women, to the end of the eighteenth century, a notion of deity either slightly removed from that of the ancient Hebrews or ethically purified without being philosophically transformed, though the astronomy of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton had immensely modified the Hebraic conception of the physical universe. We know that Newton did not really hold by the Christian scheme—he wrote, at times, in fact, as a pantheist—but some later astronomers seem to have done so. When, however, the Marquis de Laplace (1749–1827) developed, in his *Exposition du Système du Monde* (1796),[1] the nebular hypothesis, previously guessed at by Bruno and ably outlined by Kant,[2] orthodox psychological habit was rudely shaken as regards the Biblical account of creation; and like every previous advance in physical science this was denounced as atheistic[3]—which, as we know, it was, Laplace having declared in reply to Napoleon that he had no need of the God hypothesis.[4] Laplace's own ultimate philosophical position has been put in doubt by expressions in his private letters which are inconsistent with atheism; but there could be no question about the godlessness of his cosmology from the Christian standpoint; and the fact that the great series of French astronomers of the eighteenth century, of whom he became the most distinguished, were all heretics carries its own significance. His crowning claim, at the close of the *Exposition*, is that astronomic science has dissipated the fears created by celestial phenomena.

Professor James Ward has seen fit to belittle Laplace in respect of his asserted inefficiency as a political official under Napoleon.[5] He might have carried such an attack further in respect of Laplace's political time-serving. If, however, it should one day be established that he became an orthodox religionist, such attacks would disappear from religious polemic, without affecting the fact that theism can derive no support

[1] Translated into English in 1809. It has been stated in one notice that the nebular hypothesis is set forth in notes at the end of the "later" editions; and in another notice (*Enc. Brit.*) that it is "relegated to a note (vii)." In the third ed. (1808) it will be found in ch. vi of liv. v.

[2] *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, 1755. Of this Laplace seems to have known nothing as late as 1808. See the *Exposition*, ed. 3e, ii, 384.

[3] Prof. A. D. White, *Hist. of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, 1896, i, 17, 22.

[4] De Morgan, giving the story in his *Budget of Paradoxes* (1872), states that previously it had "never been printed entire."

[5] Gifford Lectures on *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 1899, i, 45.

from Laplace's system. That was no random hypothesis. He had triumphantly completed the analysis which finally established the stability of the solar system before he schemed the *Système du Monde.* Confirmed in essentials by all subsequent science, Laplace's system widens immensely the gulf between modern cosmology and the historic theism of the Christian era ; and the subsequent concrete developments of astronomy, giving as they do such an insistent and overwhelming impression of physical infinity, have made the "Christian hypothesis"[1] fantastic save for minds capable of enduring any strain on the sense of consistency.

Paine had brought the difficulty vividly home to the common intelligence ; and though the history of orthodoxy is a history of the success of institutions and majorities in imposing incongruous conformities, the perception of the incongruity on this side must have been a force of disintegration. The freethinking of the French astronomers of the Revolution period marks a decisive change ; and as early as 1826 we find in a work on Jewish antiquities by a Scotch clergyman a very plain indication[2] of disbelief in the Hebrew story of the stopping of the sun and moon, or (alternatively) of the rotation of the earth. It is typical of the tenacity of religious delusion that a quarter of a century later this among other irrational credences was contended for by the Swiss theologian Gaussen,[3] and by the orthodox majority elsewhere, when for all scientifically trained men it had become frivolous.[4]

§ 3. *Geology and Palæontology*

A more general effect, however, was probably wrought by the science of geology, which in a stable and tested form belongs to the nineteenth century. Of its theoretic founders in the eighteenth century, Werner and Dr. James Hutton (1726–97), the latter and more important[5] is known from his *Investigation of the Principles of Knowledge* (1794) to have been consciously a freethinker on more grounds than that of his naturalistic science ; and his *Theory of the Earth* (1785–95) was duly denounced

[1] The phrase is used by a French Protestant pastor. *La verité chrétienne et la doute moderne* (Conférences), 1879, pp. 24–5.

[2] *Antiquities of the Jews*, by William Brown, D.D., Edinburgh, 1826, i, 121–2. Brown quotes "from a friend" a demonstration of the monstrous consequences of a stoppage of the earth's rotation.

[3] *Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, Eng. trans. Edinburgh, 1850, pp. 246–9. Gaussen elaborately argues that if eighteen minutes were allowed for the stoppage of the earth's rotation, no shock would occur. Finally, however, he argues that there may have been a mere refraction of the sun's rays—an old theory, already set forth by Brown.

[4] It is to be recorded, however, that a theological work reconciling Genesis with geology appeared in 1927, about the time at which two eminent Bishops had announced in the pulpit that the Creation story is folklore, and that Darwinism is true.

[5] Cp. Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. iii, 505 ; H. B. Woodward, *History of Geology*, 1911, pp. 24–30.

as atheistic.[1] For orthodox Christians, Hutton's proposition, "In the economy of the world I can find no traces of a beginning, no prospect of an end," was emphatically of that order. But, brilliantly popularized by Playfair (1802), Hutton's doctrine made irresistible progress; and the independent labours of William Smith (1769–1839), establishing the fact that certain fossils are found only in certain beds, formed a new starting point (1799) for strictly inductive geology in England. The whole bearing of the new conception gradually forced itself on geologists and lay readers alike.[2]

Whereas the physical infinity of the universe almost forced the orthodox to concede a vast cosmic process of some kind as preceding the shaping of the earth and solar system, the formation of these within six days was one of the plainest assertions in the sacred books; and every system of scientific geology excluded such a conception. Soon therefore we find orthodox students of geology protesting that "the expressions of Moses are evidently accommodated to the first and familiar notions derived from the sensible appearances of the earth and heavens," and that "there is nothing in Genesis to exclude the idea of the possible existence of previous worlds, from the wreck of which our globe was organized."[3] Other devices were resorted to. As the evidence accumulated, in the hands of men mostly content to deprecate religious opposition,[4] there was duly evolved the quaint compromise of the doctrine that the Biblical six "days" meant six ages—a fantasy still cherished in the pulpit. On the ground of that absurdity, nevertheless, there gradually grew up a new conception of the antiquity of the earth. Thus a popular work on geology, such as *The Ancient World* (1847), by Professor D. T. Ansted (1814–80), could begin with the proposition that "long before the human race had been introduced on the earth this world of ours existed as the habitation of living things different from those now inhabiting its surface."

Even the thesis of "six ages," and others of the same order, drew upon their supporters angry charges of "infidelity." Hugh Miller, whose natural gifts for geological research were chronically turned to confusion by his orthodox bias, was repeatedly so assailed, when in point of fact he was perpetually tampering with the data to salve the Scriptures.[5] Of

[1] White, as cited, i, 222–3, gives a selection of the language in general use among theologians on the subject.

[2] As to Smith's originality, cp. H. B. Woodward, pp. 31–8; Dr. E. Greenly, *The Earth* (R. P. A. 1927), pp. 40–1.

[3] Rev. Dr. Sumner, *Records of Creation*, ii, 356, cited in Dr. W. Buckland's lecture, *Vindiciæ Geologicæ*, 1820, pp. 25–7.

[4] The early policy of the Geological Society of London (1807), which professed to seek for facts and to disclaim theories as premature (cp. Whewell, iii, 428; Buckle, iii, 392), was at least as much socially as scientifically prudential.

[5] See the excellent monograph of W. M. Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller: a Critical Study*, 1905, ch. vi; and cp. Spencer's essay on *Illogical Geology—Essays*, vol. i; and Baden Powell's *Christianity without Judaism*, 1857, p. 254 *sq.* Miller's friend Dick, the Thurso naturalist, being a freethinker, escaped such error (Mackenzie, pp. 161–4).

all the natural sciences geology had been most retarded by the Christian canonization of error.[1] Even the plain fact that area which is dry land had once been sea was obstinately distorted through centuries, though Ovid[2] had put the observations of Pythagoras in the way of all scholars, and though Leonardo da Vinci had insisted on the visible evidence; nay, deistic habit could keep even Voltaire incredulous on the subject when he found the data employed to buttress the Scriptural legend of the Deluge.[3] When the scientific truth began to force its way in the teeth of such authorities as Cuvier, who stood for the "Mosaic" doctrine, the effect was proportionately marked; and whether or not the suicide of Miller (1856) was in any way due to despair on perception of the collapse of his reconciliation of geology with Genesis,[4] the scientific demonstration made an end of revelationism for many. What helped most to save orthodoxy from humiliation on the scientific side was the attitude of men like Professor Baden Powell, whose scientific knowledge and habit of mind moved him to attack the Judaism of the Bibliolaters in the name of Christianity, and in the name of truth finally to declare that "nothing in geology bears the smallest semblance to any part of the Mosaic cosmogony, torture the interpretation to what extent we may."[5] In 1857 this was very bold language for a university professor.

5. The full force of the geological record as against Hebrew tradition did not become clear until there was added to the proof of the antiquity of the earth that of the antiquity of man. As the eighteenth century could adjust itself to the Copernican and Newtonian systems without much sense of harm to the Biblical conception of things, so the nineteenth was adjusting itself, with help from the pseudo-geology of the apologists, to the notion of the vast antiquity of the planet without surrendering its belief in the legendary "creation" of man. But gradually the facts which exploded that myth came to the front, through half a century of resistance, partly operating through dense indifference, partly in fear of orthodox hostility, and partly against ignorant ridicule. The surmise of Mercati in the sixteenth century, and of Mahudel in the eighteenth, that the flint "thunderstones" of classical and modern superstition were really implements made by prehistoric savage men, had been acquiesced in by Buffon, but not pressed by him after his humiliation by

[1] Cp. the details given by Whewell, iii, 406–8, 411–3, 506–7, as to early theories of a sound order, all of which came to nothing. Steno, a Dane resident in Italy in the seventeenth century, had reached non-Scriptural and just views on several points. Cp. White, *Hist. of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 215. Leonardo da Vinci and Fracastoro had reached them still earlier. [2] *Metamorphoses*, lib. xv.

[3] In the case of geology, in the same fashion, clerical polemists argued that the displacements of geological strata proved the historicity of the Deluge, since the Creator *must* have made his world in an orderly fashion. See Dr. Hunt's *Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 13, 297. Cp. p. 294 as to shells on mountains.

[4] He had just completed a work on the subject at his death. Cp. Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller*, as cited, pp. 134–5, 146–7. [5] *Christianity without Judaism*, pp. 256–7.

the Church. In the year 1800, when John Frere presented to the London Society of Antiquaries visibly manufactured flint implements found deep in the clay beds near Hoxne, there was no scientific life in England that could avail itself of the evidence; and when in 1823 Dr. Buckland published a discussion of that and other new data in his *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*, the title and the argument, claiming to verify the story of the Deluge of Noah, served to avert any general awakening. About the same time, when Boué, of the Vienna Academy of Sciences, showed Cuvier human bones found in the diluvial deposits of the Upper Rhine, the obstinate French expert refused to see any evidence in the case for the geological antiquity of man. And when in 1825 a Catholic priest named McEnery found in Kent's Cavern, near Torquay, clear evidence of human remains alongside of those of extinct mammals, he was fain to keep his notes in manuscript. Fifteen years later, in 1840, Godwin Austin read a paper to the Royal Geological Society on his researches in the same cavern; and still the fear of the bigots was so strong that the paper was not published.[1]

It was in France that the new truth was at length forced to the front, after a number of tentatives. In 1828 Tournal of Narbonne published an account of human remains found in a cave at Bize among bones of mammals admitted by Cuvier to belong to the Quaternary epoch; and in 1829 de Christol of Montpellier, in a paper submitted to the Paris Institut, put forward strongly corroborative evidence. Schmerling in 1833 produced equivalent proofs from Belgium; and in 1835 the young Joly published a paper at Geneva offering fresh data. Still there was no general scientific response; and Schmerling was even led to issue a kind of apology for the temerity of his propositions. In 1838 Marcel de Serres published a work in which the existence of man alongside of the extinct mammals was declared, on all this evidence, to be "an established fact"; but as late as 1860 this writer made something in the nature of a retractation.[2]

To the famous Boucher de Perthes, the archæologist of the Somme valley, was due the ultimate arousing of the scientific world to the momentous truth. From the year 1836 he had been making his own excavations in caves, tombs, peat mosses, finding flint knives and axes in positions which told one unvarying tale; and in 1839 he brought his specimens from Abbeville to Paris, only to be treated by the geologists there as a cracked enthusiast. He was indeed no finished man of science. At the outset he avowedly presented his flints simply as the work of "antediluvians," standing by the Deluge as Buckland had done; and even at the height of his career he put absurd propositions about carvings of faces on his flints. But he had the root of the matter in him as

[1] White, *Warfare of Science with Religion*, i, 267–70.
[2] Joly, *Man before Metals*, Eng. trans. 1883, pp. 48–51.

compared with most of those who flouted him. Professed men of science refused even to look at his excavations and specimens, as the academics of Italy had of old refused to look through Galileo's telescope.

But Boucher de Perthes was one of the born fighters; and he indomitably carried on his battle where other inquirers had turned aside in discouragement. In addition to the tactics of silence and of ridicule, every expedient of defence had been tried: the shaping of the flints was alternately ascribed to frost and volcanic fire; the deposits were declared to be within the historic period, or to have been accidentally juxtaposed in all the ever-increasing number of cases discovered. But when, in 1855, Dr. Rigollet, who had begun as a determined antagonist, read a paper setting forth in powerful array the grounds of his conversion to the views of Boucher de Perthes, the tide began to turn, and it thenceforth moved steadily in the direction of inductive science. English students at length came into line with the French pioneer. Falconer and Prestwich, commissioned by the Royal Society to investigate discoveries made in the cave at Brixham in Devonshire, reported in loyal accordance with the evidence; and in 1860 Lyell, who had given no support to the pioneers of the 'thirties, yielded his adhesion to the main doctrines of Boucher de Perthes. In the world of science the battle was won.[1]

There was thus more significance than Professor Whewell (1794–1866) realized in his remark, in 1837: "It is not too much to say that in our time Practical Geology has been one of the best schools of philosophical and general culture of mind."[2] It had created a new intellectual atmosphere for many men who, open-minded to the lore of physical Nature, might have failed to find in philosophical reflection any sufficient support against the heavy pressures of irrational tradition upon all opinion. On bases of tested physical fact they found strength for the reconsideration of inherited religion, and were thus creating the mental conditions in which all manner of questing criticism was to find a living response.

§ 4. *Cerebral Physiology*

Inevitably there went on, independently of though concurrently with the new studies of earth and sky, a new scrutiny of Man in his physical nature as in his social capacities. Thus arose a strife which flamed up more rapidly than that over the sciences of pre-history. From France came the impulse to a naturalistic handling of biology, long before the day of Charles Darwin, and alongside of the more poetic pioneering of Erasmus Darwin, his grandfather.

[1] Narratives in Joly, *Man before Metals*, pp. 35–53; White, *Warfare*, i, 275–83; Carl Vogt, *Lectures on Man*, Eng. trans. 1864, pp. 16–17; R. Munro, *Prehistoric Problems*, 1897, pp. 6–14; Sir Arthur Keith, *The Antiquity of Man*, 1915, ch. iii; and J. Barr Mitchell's *Dates and Data*, 1876.

[2] *History of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. iii, 430.

The protagonist in this case was the physician P.-J.-G. Cabanis (1757–1808), the colleague of Laplace in the School of Sciences.[1] Growing up in the generation of the Revolution, Cabanis had met, in the salon of Madame Helvétius, d'Holbach, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Laplace, Condillac, Volney, Franklin, and Jefferson, and became the physician of Mirabeau. His treatise on the *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* (1796–1802)[2] might be described as the systematic application to psychology of that "positive" method to which all the keenest thought of the eighteenth century had been tending, yet with much of the literary or rhetorical tone by which the French writers of that age had nearly all been characterized. For Cabanis, the psychology of Helvétius and Condillac had been discounted by their ignorance of physiology;[3] and he easily put aside the primary errors, such as the "equality of minds" and the entity of "the soul," which even they took over from previous thinkers. His own work is on the whole the most searching and original handling of the main problems of psycho-physiology that had yet been achieved; and to this day its suggestiveness has not been exhausted. Since his time no competent physiologist has denied—what, indeed, had been realized by many before him—that "mental disease" is the concomitant of physiological disturbance; though the phenomena of insanity are still generally ignored by those who regard "mind" as an independent entity; and the immortality of the insane appears to be assumed as involving their "restoration" to a sanity which in many cases they never had.

But Cabanis, in his turn, made the mistake of Helvétius and Condillac. Not content with presenting the results of his study in the province in which he was relatively master, he undertook to reach ultimate truth in those of ethics and philosophy, in which he was not so. In the preface to the *Rapports* he lays down an emphatically agnostic conviction as to final causes: "ignorance the most invincible," he declares, is all that is possible to man on that issue.[4] But not only does he in his main work freely and loosely generalize on the phenomena of history and overleap the ethical problem: he penned shortly before his death a *Lettre sur les causes premières*, addressed to Fauriel,[5] in which the aging intelligence is seen reverting to à priori processes, and concluding in favour of a "sort of stoic pantheism"[6] with a balance towards normal theism and a belief in immortality. The final doctrine did not in the least affect the argument of the earlier, which was simply one of positive science; but the clerical world, which had in the usual fashion denounced the scientific

[1] There is a good account of Cabanis in F. Picavet's *Les Idéologues*, 1891.

[2] The work consists of twelve "Mémoires" or treatises, six of which were read in 1796–7 at the Institut. They appeared in book form in 1802.

[3] *Rapports*, Ier Mémoire, § ii, near end. (Ed. 1843, p. 73.) Cp. Préf. (pp. 46–7).

[4] Ed. cited, p. 54. Cp. p. 207, *note*.

[5] Not published till 1824.

[6] Ueberweg, ii, 339.

doctrine, not on the score of any attack by Cabanis upon religion, but because of its incompatibility with the notion of the entozoic soul, naturally made much of the mystical,[1] and accorded its framer authority from that moment.

As for the conception of "vitalism" put forward in the Letter to Fauriel by way of explanation of the phenomena of life, it is but a reversion to the earlier doctrine of Stahl, of which Cabanis had been a partisan in his youth.[2] The fact remains that he gave an enduring impulse to positive science,[3] his own final vacillation failing to arrest the employment of the method he had inherited and improved. Most people know him solely through one misquotation, the famous phrase that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." This is not only an imperfect statement of his doctrine: it suppresses precisely the idea by which Cabanis differentiates from pure "sensationalism." What he taught was that "*impressions, reaching the brain, set it in activity*, as aliments reaching the stomach excite it to a more abundant secretion of gastric juice.....The function proper to the first is to perceive particular impressions, to attach to them signs, to combine different impressions, to separate them, to draw from them judgments and determinations, as the function of the second is to act on nutritive substances," etc.[4] It is after this statement of the known processus, and after pointing out that there is as much of pure inference in the one case as in the other, that he concludes: "The brain *in a manner* digests impressions, and makes organically the secretion of thought"; and this conclusion, he points out, disposes of the difficulty of those who "cannot conceive how judging, reasoning, imagining, can ever be anything else than feeling. The difficulty ceases when one recognizes, in these different operations, the action of the brain upon the impressions which are passed on to it."

The doctrine is, in short, an elementary truth of psychological science, as distinguished from the pseudo-science of the Ego considered as an incorporeal entity. To that pseudo-science Cabanis gave a vital wound; and his derided formula is for true science to-day almost a truism. The attacks made upon his doctrine in the next generation served only to emphasize anew the eternal dilemma of theism. On the one hand his final "vitalism" was repugnant to those who, on traditional lines, insisted upon a distinction between "soul" and "vital force"; on the other hand, those who sought to frame a philosophic case for theism against him made the usual plunge into pantheism, and were reproached

[1] Cp. Luchaire, as cited, p. 36; and Picavet, p. 273 *sq.*

[2] Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, ii, 134.

[3] "Since Cabanis, the referring back of mental functions to the nervous system has remained dominant in physiology, whatever individual physiologists may have thought about final causes" (Lange, ii, 70). Compare the tribute of Cabanis's orthodox editor Cerise (ed. 1843, Introd. pp. xlii–iii); and those cited by Picavet, pp. 288–92.

[4] *Rapports*, IIe Mémoire, near end. (Ed. cited, p. 122.)

accordingly by the orthodox.[1] All that remained was the indisputable "positive" gain. Had the psychological analysis of Cabanis's friend Destutt de Tracy been assimilated at the same time, science would have been advanced by a whole generation.[2]

3. In England the influence of the French stimulus in physiology was seen even more clearly than that of the great generalization of Laplace. Professor William Lawrence (1783–1867), the physiologist, published in 1816 an 'Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology,' containing some remarks on the nature of life, which elicited from the then famous Dr. Abernethy a foul attack in his *Physiological Lectures* delivered before the College of Surgeons. Lawrence was charged with belonging to a party of French physiological sceptics whose aim was to "loosen those restraints on which the welfare of mankind depends."[3] In the introductory lecture of his course of 1817 before the College of Physicians, Lawrence severely retaliated, repudiating the general charge, but reasserting that the dependence of life on organization is as clear as the derivation of daylight from the sun. The war was adroitly carried at once into the enemy's territory in the declaration that "The profound, the virtuous and fervently pious Pascal acknowledged, what all sound theologians maintain, that the immortality of the soul, the great truths of religion, and the fundamental principles of morals, cannot be demonstrably proved by mere reason; and that revelation alone is capable of dissipating the uncertainties which perplex those who inquire too curiously into the sources of these important principles. All will acknowledge that, as no other remedy can be so perfect and satisfactory as this, no other can be necessary, if we resort to this with firm faith."[4]

The value of this pronouncement is indicated later in the same volume by subacid allusions to "those who regard the Hebrew Scriptures as writings composed with the assistance of divine inspiration," and who receive Genesis "as a narrative of actual events." Indicating various "grounds of doubt respecting inspiration," the lecturer adds that the stories of the naming of the animals and their collection in the ark, "if

[1] See the already cited introduction of Cerise, who solved the problem religiously by positing "a force which executes the plans of God without our knowledge or intervention" (p. xix). He goes on to lament the pantheism of Dr. Dubois (whose *Examen des doctrines de Cabanis, Gall, et Broussais* (1842) was put forward as a vindication of the "spiritual" principle), and of the German school of physiology represented by Oken and Burdach.

[2] Picavet, in his favourable estimate, does not fully realize this.

[3] Lawrence's *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*, 8th ed. 1840, pp. 1–3. The aspersion by Abernethy is typical of the orthodox malignity of the time. Cabanis in his preface had expressly contended for the all-importance of morals. The orthodox Dr. Cerise, who edited his book in 1843, while acknowledging the high character of Cabanis, thought fit to speak of "the materialists" as "interested in abasing man" (introd. p. xxi). On the score of fear of demoralization, the champions of "spirit" themselves exhibited the maximum of baseness.

[4] Lawrence's *Lectures*, p. 9, *note*.

we are to understand them as applied to the living inhabitants of the whole world, are zoologically impossible."[1] On the principle then governing such matters Lawrence was in 1822, on the score of his heresies, refused copyright in his lectures, which were accordingly reprinted many times in a cheap stereotyped edition, and thus widely diffused.[2]

This hardy attack was reinforced in 1819, at the cost of a fresh virulence of orthodox hostility, by the publication of Sir T. C. Morgan's 'Sketches of the Philosophy of Life,' wherein the physiological materialism of Cabanis is firmly developed, and a typical sentence of his figures as a motto on the title-page. The method is strictly naturalistic, alike on the medical and on the philosophic side; and "vitalism" is argued down as explicitly as is anthropomorphism.[3] As a whole the book tells notably of the stimulus of recent French thought upon English. No doubt Morgan's obvious satisfaction in provoking both priests and physicians hindered the acceptance of his views and promoted the special hostility which drove him out of medical practice. The upshot so far was a preparation for a new conception—adumbrated by Diderot and Condillac—of Mind as a progressive concomitant of organic life. After the middle of the century that conception was to be enlarged by the doctrine of Evolution to the extent of realizing the enormously protracted emergence of mind-forms up to Man, and in the case of Man himself. The philosophico-scientific synthesis has not yet been reached.

> At the moment of the writing of these lines specialists are seen still largely divided into two camps, of which one (the larger) sees that all mental processes are determined by brain conditions—these making the irreducible difference between sanity and insanity, while the other sees as clearly that mental states can determine brain conditions, as when a bereaved person becomes insane through grief. It would seem a simple matter to collate the facts and deduce that excessive stimulation of certain organs by the results of their own conscient action operates as does a physiological causation of brain disturbance either from impact or from internal stimulation or inhibition by drugs or secretions; the conclusion being that consciousness and organ are two sides or constituents of the dual phenomenon of mind, as H^2O = water.
>
> The obstacle to agreement is evidently the religious but irrational presupposition of an entozoic soul, which *ex hypothesi* can post-

[1] *Id.* pp. 168–9.

[2] Yet Lawrence was created a baronet two months before his death. So much progress had been made in half a century.

[3] Work cited, pp. 355 *sq.*, 375 *sq.* The tone is at times expressive of a similar attitude towards historical religion—e.g., "Human testimony is of so little value..... that it cannot be received with sufficient caution. To doubt is the beginning of wisdom." *Id.* p. 269,

humously subsist without brain. The way out may perhaps be found in the other retarded recognition of the individual self-assertion of organs, considered in this aspect as analogous to blood corpuscles. Agreement need not be barred by any insistence on the presence of "mystery," which is already conceded as regards H^2O. In sum, an over-active organ physiologically upsets the sane collaboration of the whole, "mind" being so conditioned.

Alongside of such speculation as that of Cabanis, Lawrence, and Morgan the new doctrine of Phrenology, founded by the German anatomist Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828), and developed, perhaps less scientifically,[1] by his sometime colleague Dr. J. G. Spurzheim (1776–1832), had inevitably a rationalistic influence. The doctrine that the convolutions of the brain vary endlessly in relative size and activity in all men and animals, and that all moral and intellectual tendencies and capacities vary concomitantly, is plainly irreconcilable with the creed of the separable soul and the primitive side of Christianity; and though it was zealously adopted by a number of deists, medical and other, it was always scouted by the Churches. Ere long, this ostracism, affecting the attitude of the medical profession, arrested in phrenology the inquiry and continuous development which are essential to all science, though the doctrine has always had many thoughtful and convinced adherents in virtue of the solidity of its groundwork.

Gall did not present his case under the title of Phrenology in the vulgar sense of a reading of characters by "bumps," but as a strict induction from an immense amount of direct observation, connected with his anatomical knowledge. His own usual term for his topic was "organology." What he recorded was invariable concomitance of special proclivity or faculty with special local cranial or sub-cranial fullness. The most remarkable of his inductions was the placing of the organ of language behind the eye, of which, when largely developed, it caused a downward protuberance. The inference has been thoroughly established by the acceptance of "Broca's convolution," which is identical with Gall's location. But all his conclusions were reached in the same inductive fashion; and he verified them by brain anatomy, in which he was one of the chief experts of his time. His works (1791-1825) are one and all valid contributions to medical and anatomical science.[2]

The argument of G. H. Lewes (*The Study of Psychology*, 1879, p. 29) that the faculty of Language cannot reasonably be located in the third convolution of the left hemisphere "in entire disregard of

[1] Cp. Mattieu Williams, *A Vindication of Phrenology*, 1894, pp. 40, 177; T. Whittaker, *The Metaphysics of Evolution*, 1926, p. 425.

[2] *Philosophisch-medicinische Untersuchungen*, etc., 1791; *Introduction au cours de physiologie du cerveau*, 1808; *Recherches sur le système nerveux*, etc., 1809. The last named and the first two volumes of the larger *Anatomie et physiologie du système nerveux*, etc. (1810–9; rep. 1822–5), bore the name of Spurzheim as well as Gall's.

the complex functions which Language implies" (involving the operation of a whole *tract* of convolutions) is really only a corrective of the form of statement, and does not affect Gall's induction. The relative *power* or activity of the language faculty may be attested by fullness at the special point indicated, whatever other convolutions may be involved in the use of language. No statement of phrenology, surely, has ever ignored the fact that the localized faculties *interact*. On Lewes's own view, the use of language will involve organs which *also* fulfil other functions. His criticism is thus itself short-sighted.

It was after Gall had developed his phrenological theory in increasingly popular courses of lectures at Vienna, beginning in 1796, that these were interdicted by the Austrian Government as being "dangerous to religion." When, after some years of lecturing in Germany in association with Spurzheim, he settled as a physician in Paris and produced his treatises, he soon found himself (1811) charged with Spinozism or atheism, to which attack he published a scientific defence, afterwards incorporated in his chief work. A caustic comment on the exceptionally foolish criticisms of Napoleon is another addition. A visit to England in 1823 revealed to him that the previous visit of Spurzheim (1814–18) had set in motion a special reaction against his science.

The breach between him and Spurzheim was probably due to the determination of the latter to force a deductive method where Gall wished to rely on pure induction. The nomenclature of the organs, begun by Gall on strictly empirical lines, was deductively developed by Spurzheim, with results that have not been wholly conducive to the scientific progress of the system. The arrest of its evolution, however, was proximately wrought by the ostracism progressively set up by the alarmed religious interests. Not without reason, they inferred non-theistic implications, though the Combes and other deists who earnestly embraced it seem to have had no misgivings on that score.

Spurzheim's alterations of his faulty nomenclature probably assisted the opposition, which however needed no such stimulation. Jeffrey in 1816 exhibited his turn for reaching conviction before study by declaring in the *Edinburgh Review*[1] that "there is not the smallest reason for supposing that the mind ever operates through the agency of any material organ, except in its perception of material objects," or in spontaneous bodily movements. It did not need acceptance of cranioscopy to discredit that puerile pronouncement; but no corroboration of the general doctrine that "the brain is the organ of mind" could avail to overcome the animus of the theologians and their allies.

George Combe, after being for a time convinced by the falsifications

[1] Many extracts from the article are given by Mattieu Williams, *Vindication of Phrenology*, ch. xix.

and the assertions of Jeffrey and the rest, among whom Sir William Hamilton was not the least unscrupulous though one of the most industrious,[1] became a determined convert; and the first edition (1824) of his *System of Phrenology* contained a drastic exposure of the bad faith of a number. In the second (1825) he recorded that they had "quitted the field." But the practical ostracism set up by orthodoxy continued, and medical men, mindful of Harvey's loss of his practice, learned to stand aside. Up to 1847 research in phrenology was maintained by means of scientific journals in Britain and elsewhere; but thereafter they disappeared, leaving the science to subsist, little developed, at the stage at which Spurzheim left it, and largely at the mercy of popular expositors, too frequently incompetent. The best, who realized the difficulty of their task in the course of life-long observation, seldom attempted book-making. The result was a state of misinformation and nescience on the subject, in which Morley could write that in the last quarter of the century a belief in phrenology "stamps a man" as ill-instructed, though Cobden might be excused for having thought it important in his day.

Morley had made no study of the problem; a fact not surprising when it is realized that Combe, benignly rhetorical, had only partially reached a scientific synthesis, and could not compass a philosophic one. The very momentousness of the doctrine postponed a radical comprehension. Condillac had prepared the way for Cabanis, and Cabanis for Gall and Spurzheim; but neither they nor their disciples Combe and Broussais were qualified to construct, over and above their array of facts, an all-embracing philosophic statement of the bearing of the proved localization of brain function on the ultimate problem of mind. Such a synthesis, in fact, would only have intensified the resistance, as it could not have been assimilated. The net significance of the science is that, even as the brain is a plexus of convolutions performing different functions, so is Personality a complex of a multitude of mental powers and proclivities, variously co-ordinated—a new challenge to the concepts of Abstract Mind and Unitary Soul.

Theistic philosophy accordingly continued, in defiance of its own formulas, to make the verbal inference of Infinite Mind from the phenomena of human mind; and rationalistic philosophy still largely concurs. As over the movement of the school of Cabanis, so over the movement of the school of Gall, we are forced to sum up that the adequate philosophico-scientific synthesis will be the work of the science of the future. The latter-day systematic revival of phrenology, on studious lines, gives promise of such a development.

In two regards, the influence of phrenology has been notably good. As Combe claimed, it teaches forbearance; and his own advocacy was

[1] Veitch's *Memoir of Sir W. Hamilton*, 1869, pp. 113–26. Carlyle's story tells of uncandid procedure.

a model of amenity, from which he eliminated even the initial polemic. It also coalesced energetically with the ideal of social betterment. The doctrine which had seemed to hasty minds a fatalistic denial of self-control became the working compass of sane reformers. Charles Bray (1811–84), the friend of the young George Eliot, disillusioned in his hopes from Owenism, found in the science as delivered to him by Combe a guide and a support alike in framing a 'Philosophy of Necessity' and in a propaganda for secular education. Whatever its schematic imperfections, it has been as clearly a rationalizing force as "spiritualism" has been otherwise.

The foregoing summary, independently made, will be found to concur with that given in Dr. A. Russel Wallace's section on Phrenology in *The Wonderful Century* (ed. 1898, pp. 159–93). He justly includes Phrenology among the "failures" of the century—in respect, that is, of the failure of scientific experts to develop it as all the other sciences have been developed. And this failure Wallace rightly explains in terms (1) of the pressure of religious ostracism on the small body of men qualified to carry the science beyond the immature stage at which Spurzheim left it, and (2) of the disastrous effect, in the middle part of the century, of the adoption of "skull-reading" as a means of gain-getting on the part of men mostly incapable of realizing the difficulty even of their own undertaking, and still more of perceiving the complexity of the scientific foundation problem. (Cp. Williams, pp. 2–8.)

Wallace nonetheless rightly insists on the actuality of the results obtained in the generation of phrenological progress; and his testimony should be examined, with the *Vindication of Phrenology* by W. Mattieu Williams (1894), by all doubters who pretend to honest investigation. A testimony ought here to be borne, further, to the services of the late Lorenzo Fowler, who, following up the earlier division of Spurzheim's "Inhabitiveness" into Concentrativeness *and* Inhabitiveness, made the division one of "Concentrativeness" (i.e., power of detachment) over "*Continuity*," thus effecting a new scientific stroke of correlation and opening the way to a vital reconsideration of the whole science.

The criticism of Phrenology by G. H. Lewes, in his *History of Philosophy*, following on a sympathetic exposition in which he vindicates the essentially scientific character of Gall's procedure, is merely a demonstration that the problem is much more difficult than it was recognized to be by those who accepted the results of Gall and Spurzheim as a decisively rounded presentment of truth. Lewes's final declaration is (*Study of Psychology*, 1879, p. 29) that "every *function* has its definite organ or group of organs," but that to localize *faculties*, which involve a variety of organs, is absurd. This is a criticism that ought to be—and indeed has been—faced. But it challenges rather Spurzheim's nomenclature than Gall's inductions.

Difficulties had been avowed and faced in the comparatively incomplex science of Astronomy, and they had abounded in Geology, and still more in Therapeutics. A brief compilation of the disparaging pronouncements by medical men and others on the errors and the assumptions of medicine during a generation would ostensibly justify the inference that in the nineteenth century, as in the age of Moliere, professional Therapeutics was but organized charlatanism.

That Phrenology, left mainly to untrained laymen and largely vitiated by their adoption of it as a means of earning a livelihood, should remain open to abundant criticism was a matter of course. But Lewes's vindication of the primary procedure remains sufficient to bear out the admission of other candid critics that charlatanism in the application cannot cancel the scientific basis; and that the apparent inconsistencies, so often loosely observed and affirmed, must just be probed as the many difficulties of Darwinism have been by students who are satisfied of its fundamental truth. The special difficulty in regard to Phrenology is just the special hostile bias rooting in theology; though much is to be allowed for the play of vanity. Men with small heads are often found to antagonize the science à priori. Their resentment is seen to be supererogatory when the statements of the advocates are studied. (E.g. Mattieu Williams, pp. 346–58, 382 *sq.*)

§ 4. *German Evolutionism*

In Germany, meantime, physical science was advancing on lines partly determined by the philosophic activity of the previous age. That is to say, certain German scientists did their thinking on lines parallel to those of the philosophy of Schelling, though many men of science, on the other hand, repudiated all dealings with the "Nature Philosophy" of that pantheistic thinker. The three outstanding German names in the scientific thought of the pre-Darwinian period, as distinct from the large number of meritorious investigators, are those of Lorenz Oken (1779–1851), Karl Ernst von Baer (1792–1876), and Theodor Schwann (1810–82).

Oken (born Okenfuss, which name he discarded because of the jests it incurred) was by bias the one "nature-philosopher" of the three. A man of encyclopædic turn, with a gift for mathematics, he would have been a soldier if he could, and always retained military tastes and a strong interest in politics, which has tended to conserve his memory as a pioneer of German unity. He was also the first effective promoter of scientific associations in Germany, here following a Swiss lead. By reason of his pugnacity in matters of press freedom, he had to leave his teaching post at Jena, and spent the latter part of his life, an expatriated man, as a professor at the new University of Zürich. His *magnum opus*, a 'Manual of Natural History' in thirteen volumes, has been described as "the first as well as the last substantial book embracing all three kingdoms of

nature since the times of Linnæus."[1] By the avowal of his admirers, however, Oken's "nature-philosophy," leading him to all manner of sweeping generalizations in the manner of Schelling, has counted for much less in science than his special thesis of the homology of the skull and the vertebræ in vertebrated animals ; and even on that matter there has been an embittered controversy as to whether he or Goethe was the discoverer.[2] Oken's independence seems clear ; but others were on the track, the truth involved being a striking phenomenon in morphology.

At no point, however, does Oken come in conflict with religious orthodoxy. In his journal *Isis*, started at Jena in 1817, he speaks as a devout theist,[3] though he makes no profession of Christian orthodoxy. Nor did either his morphological doctrine or those of Von Baer, the discoverer of the human ovum (1827) and the framer of a 'History of the Evolution of Animals' (1828), create any theological protest, having been propounded in the period of German religious liberty between 1815 and 1840. Von Baer, in fact, did not realize the full scope of his own formula as to the progress of all organization from simplicity to heterogeneity, which later became the basis of the complete Evolution theory of Herbert Spencer. He is to be reckoned the chief founder of Comparative Embryology.

Schwann, lastly, was so far from being a gainsayer of dogma that he remained all his life a devout Roman Catholic, being professor for a time at Louvain and latterly at Liège. His greatest contribution to biological science is his elaboration of the Cell Theory (1837), a conception which does not collide with Biblical ideas. It was thus not the scientific men of Germany who in that age directly influenced the attitude of modern thought to traditional religion : that was the work of her Biblical critics, for the most part clerically trained. But when we remember that Gall and Spurzheim too were Germans, though operating chiefly in France and England, the actual German share in the post-Revolution renascence is seen to be comprehensive.

[1] A. Ecker, *Lorenz Oken*, Eng. trans., 1883, p. 27.

[2] See Richard Owen's art. on Oken in the *Encyc. Brit.*, and Ecker, as cited, pp. 21–4, 56–62, 112, 118, 123–4, 128, 131–2. Goethe comes out of the matter less satisfactorily than Oken, to whom he behaved ungenerously.

[3] Ecker, p. 34.

Chapter VI

BIBLICAL CRITICISM TO BAUR

§ 1. *The German Movement*

What may be termed the literary and ethical criticism of the Bible had for a long period been conducted by laymen before that strict historical analysis of the documents which is latterly called "the Higher Criticism" began to be developed among the trained scholars and theologians of Germany. After Spinoza, the deists in England, from Toland and Collins to Parvish, had by the avowal of later scholars laid the foundations of the study. But the deists always figured rather as "infidels" than as scholars; and the quite sound work of Samuel Parvish, the Guildford bookseller (1739), on the late date of the composition of Deuteronomy, found no more scholarly response in his own country than did the work of the French physician Astruc, who (1753) first clearly indicated the duality of the "Elohim" and "Yahweh" elements in the Pentateuch.

1. It was chiefly German professional scholarship that for a time assimilated the work of the pioneers and carried it forward on scholarly lines. It was long, indeed, before the scholarly process was purged of uncritical assumptions. Only in our day has German "expert" criticism openly reckoned with propositions fairly and fully made out by German writers of three or more generations back. Thus in 1781 Corodi in his *Geschichte des Chiliasmus* dwelt on the pre-Hebraic origins of the belief in angels, in immortality, and heaven and hell, and on the Persian derivation of the Jewish seven archangels; Wegscheider in 1819 in his *Institutes of Theology* indicated further connections of the same order, and cited pagan parallels to the virgin-birth; J. A. L. Richter in the same year pointed to Indian and Persian precedents for the Logos and many other Christian doctrines; and several other writers, before Strauss, pointed to both Persian and Babylonian influences on Jewish theology and myth.[1]

2. Gradually the study developed precision of method, though there were to be witnessed repetitions of the intellectual anomalies of the past, so-called rationalists losing the way while supernaturalists occasionally found it. It has been remarked by Reuss that Paulus, a clerical "rationalist," fought for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the very year in which Tholuck, a reconverted evangelical, gave up the Pauline authorship as hopeless; that when Schleiermacher, ostensibly a

[1] See Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments*, 1903, pp. 1–2, *note*.

believer in inspiration, denied the authenticity of the Epistle to Timothy, the [theological] rationalist Wegscheider opposed him; and that the rationalistic Eichhorn maintained the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch long after the supernaturalist Vater had disproved it.[1] Still the general movement was inevitably and irrevocably rationalistic, though the term "rationalist" became sadly compromised by the facile fashion in which the first claimants to the title simplified their problem by believing that every record was true at bottom if only the element of miracle were deleted. That easy solution long retarded the historic comprehension of the past; but it was finally dismissed by a more critical rationalism which probed deeper.

Beginning with the Old Testament, criticism gradually saw more and more of mere myth where of old men had seen miracle, and where the first rationalists saw natural events misconceived. Soon the process reached the New Testament, every successive step being resisted in the old fashion; and much laborious work, now mostly forgotten, was done by a whole company of scholars, among whom Eichhorn, Paulus, De Wette, G. L. Bauer, Wegscheider, Bretschneider, and Gabler were prominent.[2] The train as it were exploded on the world in the great *Life of Jesus* by Strauss (1835), a year after the death of Schleiermacher; and in the same year Vatke in his 'Religion of the Old Testament and the Canonical Books' applied the Hegelian doctrine of the evolution of Spirit to a study of Hebrew history in which its main features are declared to be critically incredible, and the story of Moses to be largely myth.[3]

3. Two guiding ideas, pervading the more liberal theological world, gave an openness of outlook to German research which was only very partially attained in Britain for another generation. Herder's early acceptance of the ancient Greek view that man began in crude savagery, not in Eden, and painfully formed language for himself, and the frequent acceptance of Hume's demonstration that religion began in the crudest savage polytheism, prepared men to see the Hebrew Sacred Books as haphazard human compilations, and not as Revelation. Long before the appearance of Benjamin Constant's exposition of primitive religion,[4] Meiners in his 'General Critical History of Religion' (1806) accepted the conclusions of Hume, and declared that Fetishism had been the oldest and the once universal religion.[5] G. P. C. Kaiser, who followed with a "freimüthig" *Biblische Theologie* in 1813, still more emphatically posited,

[1] Reuss, *History of the Canon*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 387. Cp. Strauss, *Einleitung in Das Leben Jesu*, § 10.

[2] See the good accounts of the development in Strauss's Introductions to his two *Lives of Jesus*, and sympathetic accounts of Eichhorn and De Wette in Professor Cheyne's *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 1893, pp. 13 *sq.*, 31 *sq.*

[3] Details are given by Mansel in Note xlv to his Bampton Lectures, 4th ed. 1859, p. 216. Cp. Pfleiderer, *Development of German Theology*, p. 252 *sq.*

[4] German trans. by Petri, vol. i, 1824.

[5] Memoirs, i, 143, cited by F. Schultze, *Der Fetischismus*, 1871, p. 16.

as against the vacillating formulas of Schelling, the utterly "unspiritual" character of the outlook of primeval man on his world.[1] Such evolutionary conceptions of society and religion could not fail to promote a breadth of view in the Biblical criticism of Germany, while Hume remained in England, for even the educated clergy, the obnoxious "infidel" who had placidly but confidently impugned the belief in miracles.

4. The most striking feature of the evolution, on a broad retrospect, is the almost untrammelled play of primary freethinking up to the point of reaction. The contrast between the freedom of theological criticism in Germany and the jealous hostility to every show of it in England at the same period is remarkable. German socio-political conditions were permitting very much such an outflow of freethought as had taken place in England in three generations of the previous century, with the difference that whereas the crusade of the deists was for the most part carried on by laymen, hostile to clericalism, that of so-called rationalism in Germany was conducted by clerical theologians, following up predecessors who had drawn their inspiration from the deists of England and France, but sought to turn it to a rectification of belief which would leave clericalism in a stronger position. For a time the freedom of the movement appears to be unchecked.

The young J.-J. Ampère, writing from Bonn to Madame Récamier in 1827, says of the German critics: "It is a curious thing, the scientific audacity with which these good theologians, despite their sincere faith, discuss the documents of that faith. One publicly declares that the Pentateuch is not of Moses; another rejects the gospel of St. John; another that of St. Matthew."[2] Whatever might be the individual protests, the rationalizing critics held a high status. Paulus enjoyed good fame and respect till his death in 1851. Röhr (1777–1848), who, unlike Paulus, was overbearing and acrimonious in controversy, and far outwent him in polemic against the supernatural element in the sacred books, was from 1820 Preacher of the Court and General Superintendent at Weimar, and is described as "the influential and all-powerful head of the Church in the Grand Duchy of Saxony."[3] For him, the one sound or valuable thing in Christianity was its ethic, plus its theism. "As to Christology, it ought to be absolutely lopped off from religion."

Compared with this drastic radicalism, the "rationalism" of Paulus was conciliatory, the gospel story being by him conserved at the cost of denudation of the miraculous. Provided that the reader would recognize the visit of the angel to Mary as a psycho-physiological hallucination, natural in the state of pregnancy, and admit that the herald angels may have been "phosphorescent appearances, such as are found at night in pastoral countries," Paulus would not interfere with his worship of Christ.

[1] *Id.* p. 17. [2] *A.-M. Ampère et J.-J. Ampère*, ed. 1875, i, 430.
[3] Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, English trans. 1889, p. 19.

Such was the engaging propaganda that was preparing the way for a more scientific study of the religious past, which was to arouse a new alarm and resentment.

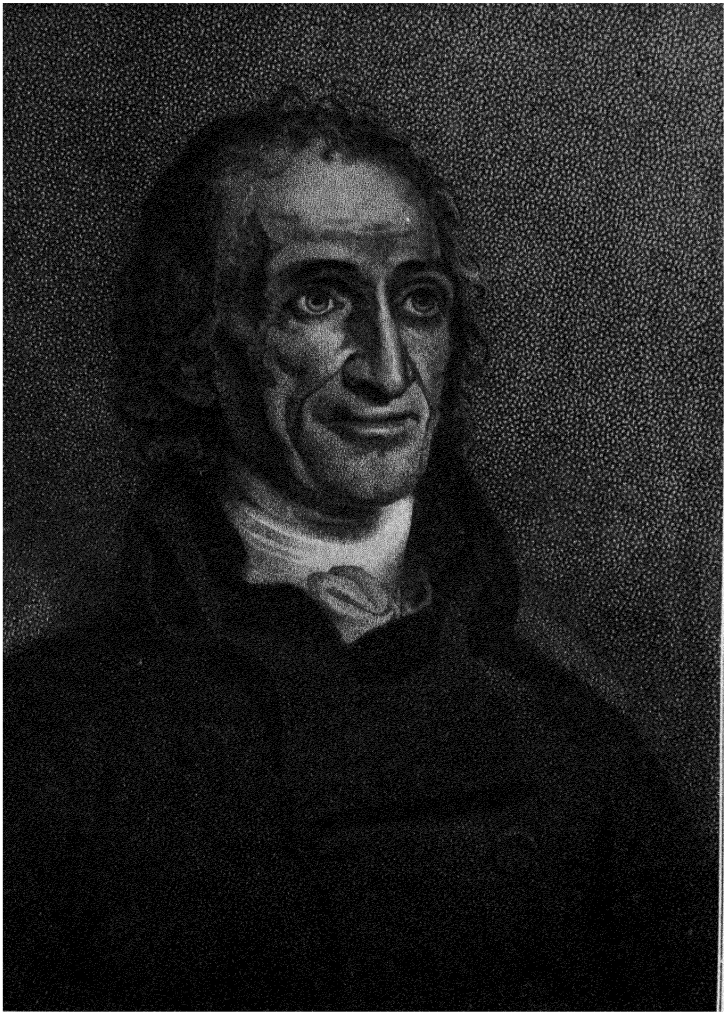
5. Criticism had long been slowly disengaging itself from that primary fallacy of taking all scriptural records as standing for facts, and explaining away the supernatural side. Step by step it was being recognized that not misinterpretation of events but *mythology* underlay much of the sacred history. Already in 1799 an anonymous and almost unnoticed German writer[1] had argued that the entire gospel story was a pre-existent conception in the Jewish mind—here giving Strauss his cue. In 1802 G. L. Bauer had produced a treatise on 'Hebrew Mythology,'[2] in which not only was the actuality of myth in Bible narrative insisted on, but the general principle of animism in savage thought was clearly formulated. Semler (1725–91) had seen that the stories of Samson and Esther were myths. Even Eichhorn—who had reduced all the Old Testament miracle stories to natural events misunderstood, had accepted Noah and the patriarchs as historical personages, and had followed Bahrdt in making Moses light a fire on Mount Sinai—changed his method on coming to the New Testament, and pointed out that only indemonstrable hypotheses could be reached by turning supernatural events into natural where there was no outside historical evidence. At the same time he insisted on the non-authenticity of a number of the Pauline epistles. Other writers—as Krug, Gabler, Kaiser, Wegscheider, and Horst—ably pressed the mythical principle, some of them preceding G. L. Bauer. The so-called "natural" theory—which was not at all that of the "*naturalists*" but the specialty of the compromising "rationalists" who took for granted a fundamental historicity—was thus effectively shaken by a whole series of critics.

But the power of intellectual habit and environment was still strikingly illustrated in the inability of all of the critics to shake off completely the old fallacy. G. L. Bauer explained the divine promise to Abraham as standing for the patriarch's own prophetic anticipation, set up by a contemplation of the starry heavens. He could not realize that the whole Abraham story was myth. Another gave up the supernatural promise of the birth of the Baptist, but held to the dumbness of Zechariah. Krug similarly accepted the item of the childless marriage, and claimed to be applying the mythical principle in taking the Magi without the star, and calling them oriental merchants. Kaiser took the story of the fish with a coin in its mouth as fact, while complaining of other less absurd reductions of miracle to natural occurrences. The method of Paulus,[3] the "Christian Evêmeros"—who loyally rejected all miracles, but got rid of them on his

[1] In a volume entitled *Offenbarung und Mythologie*—not to be confounded with the *Mythologie und Offenbarung* of Dr. Ludwig Noack (1845). Strauss mentions the book of 1799, but goes into no detail.

[2] *Hebräische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments.*

[3] *Evangeliencommentar*, 1800–4; *Leben Jesu*, 1828,



ALEXANDER GEDDES

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plan of explaining, e.g., that when Jesus was supposed to be walking on the water he was really walking on the bank—was still popular, a generation after Schleiermacher's *Reden*. The mythical theory as a whole went on hesitating among definitions and genera—saga and legend, historical myth, mythical history, philosophical myth, poetic myth—and the differences of the mythological school over method and terminology arrested the acceptance of their fundamental principle.

The course of criticism was in itself illustrating, for posterity, the law of evolution, in the gradual emergence of new perceptions, the haphazard linking of clues, the mixture of truth and error, and the struggle of disinterested truth-seeking with passionate bigotry and inert conservatism—a confused and unending strife, in which science is forever "becoming." Even in Germany, too, there were limits to innovation. It was presumably from prudential motives that there was no name, and a false imprint, on the bulky romance entitled 'A Non-Supernatural [*Natürliche*] History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth' (Bethlehem [Copenhagen] 1800–2–5), by Karl Heinrich Venturini (1768–1849), setting forth a fictitious life of Jesus,[1] in terms of a theory that he was "the tool of a secret Order." Such a view had been propounded in the previous century by the German freethinker known to the next age as "the notorious Bahrdt"; and the practice of producing such Lives of Jesus subsisted in Germany down to the 'seventies.[2]

They effected little for a critical understanding of the gospel problem, proceeding as they did on all manner of guesses as to what *might* have happened in the area of the gospel story. They stand for the immature German "rationalism" which rationalized only up to the point of discarding supernatural stories and inventing substitutes, taking for granted that, miracle apart, the narrative was historical. The Life of Jesus by Karl August Hase (1829),[3] which, though the work of a serious scholar, adhered in part to that method, is pronounced "the first attempt by a fully equipped scholar to reconstruct the life of Jesus on a purely historical basis."[4] Dropping the birth-legends and the synoptic miracles, it accepts those of the fourth gospel as authentic, and "created the modern historico-psychological picture of Jesus."[5] A more important performance was soon to establish, for Germany and the world, a sounder critical method.

§ 2. *Geddes*

The study that advanced so erratically in Germany proceeded much more sluggishly in England, where a scholarly as distinguished from an ecclesiastical Biblical scholarship could hardly be said to exist in the first

[1] Frequently referred to by Strauss.

[2] Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Eng. trans. of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*) 1910, pp. 4, 38–47, 161–79. Venturini's own book has latterly been often reprinted.

[3] *Das Leben Jesu zunächst für akademische Studien.*

[4] Schweitzer, p. 59. Hase's book reached a fifth edition.

[5] *Id.* p. 61.

third of the century. Something had been done by the Unitarians Belsham and Priestley, who pressed the critical case against the opening narratives of Matthew and Luke; but their study was limited by their aim; and Paine remained the popular representative of Biblical criticism as to both the Old and New Testaments.

What might have been a fruitful opening elsewhere or at another time had been ineffectually made in the year 1800, in the 'Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures, corresponding with a New Translation of the Bible, Vol. I, containing Remarks on the Pentateuch,' a formidable quarto, by the learned and versatile Scottish Catholic priest, Dr. Alexander Geddes (1737–1802). That gifted scholar had already produced over thirty treatises, tractates, poems, sermons, and translations,[1] of which his 'New Translation' (2 vols. 1792–7) was the most important; but the *Critical Remarks* made a new though brief sensation. Coming from any one, they would have been provocative; from a Catholic priest they were portentous. Naturally he was deprived of his priestly functions.

The Catholic priest, here following in the steps of Eichhorn and Rosenmüller, declares of the Mosaic creation: "I believe it to be a most beautiful mythos, or philosophical fiction.....adapted to the shallow intellects of a rude barbarous nation, and perfectly well calculated for the great and good purpose for which it was contrived—namely, to establish the belief of one supreme God and Creator, in opposition to the various and wild systems of idolatry which then prevailed," and to enforce Sabbath observance.[2] Further, he firmly announces in the preface that, while repudiating all charges of infidelity and irreligion, he will not pretend to believe what he finds no sufficient reason for believing, placing the "vulgar Papist" and the "vulgar Protestant" on the same level of unreasoning credulity. "*Christian* is my name," he exclaims, "and *Catholic* my surname"; and at the close of the volume he protests that "the God of Moses, Jehovah, *if* he really *be* such as he is described in the Pentateuch, is not the God whom I adore; nor the God whom I could love."

When from this standpoint he proceeded to declare that there are many incredible narratives in the Bible, that the Pentateuch is a literary composite, and that in particular the claim of Moses to an intercourse with Deity was "feigned," under sheer necessity of overawing a rebellious people, he of course enraged Papists and Protestants alike. The Catholic priest in fact wrote like an aggressive deist of the revolutionary period, and was duly denounced in so far as he was noticed at all.[3] He was, in

[1] These include versions of Horace, of the first Book of the Iliad, and of Gresset's *Ver-Vert*.

[2] *Critical Remarks*, p. 26.

[3] Coleridge, in one of his moods of rabid pietism, made a note on Geddes as "that bubbling ice-spring of cold-hearted, mad-headed fanaticism" (*Anima Poetæ*, p. 109). (Note datable 1804.)

fact, enabled to subsist only by the munificence of his patron, Lord Petrie, and could publish his books only by subscription.

His volume of 1797 had, indeed, a friendly notice in the *Monthly Review*, one of the liberal periodicals still surviving at that date; but this served chiefly to excite the fury of the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. The propositions of Geddes which to-day serve to indicate his historic insight were for that tribunal the marks of his depravity. The view that "the Hebrew like all other historians wrote from such documents as they could find, old songs, public registers," and were as injudicious and credulous as other ancient compilers, received the horrified tribute of large capitals.[1]

Twice over was Geddes arraigned in the new periodical, figuring in the eye of one reviewer as "this brander of God's own writings with contradictions, this desperate renegade from the gospel of his God, this audacious leveller of all lines set up by God for the obedience of man."[2] The fury is not wholly theological. Geddes had been so indiscreet as to annex to his volume of 1797 a note of thanks to the French Directory "for indulging him with the use of the inedited manuscripts of Voltaire and Helvétius from the National Library," and to add that he had profited by the reading. That settled the question of the merits of his book.

His critically friendly biographer, John Mason Good,[3] writing his Life in 1803, has nothing but rebuttal for his heresies. The layman, a scholar but a conformist in science, pronounces[4] that "every geologic investigation tends progressively to demonstrate the *literal* truth of the Mosaic narrative, and consequently to confirm our faith in the whole volume of scripture." The remarkable thing, for that day, is that the orthodox biographer still speaks generously and admiringly of the somewhat tempestuously sincere character of the dead heretic, whom his biography served rather to bury than to celebrate. Geddes's books were never reprinted, his translation of the Bible having as many literary demerits as scholarly merits; and his name and works are rarely mentioned even in culture histories since the Boyle Lectures of Van Mildert.

Van Mildert, then a holder of two livings, finally bishop of Durham, notes in the Appendix (i, 541, ed. 1808) of his Boyle Lectures on 'The Rise and Progress of Infidelity' (1806; 2nd ed. 1808) that the *Monthly Review* of August, 1803, had "highly extolled" Geddes's 'Remarks' and spoken of a belief in the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures as "superstitious reverence." This must have been exceptional, for Good speaks only of "much obloquy." For his own part, Van Mildert promises Paine, Godwin, and Geddes "speedy oblivion" (i, 405, 413). On the whole, his own chance in that way

[1] Review cited, 1798, vol. i, p. 318.
[2] *Id.* p. 695.
[3] A widely learned Unitarian physician, of great literary industry. The Bohn translation of Lucretius is his work. In his latter years he reverted to the Church of England.
[4] *Life*, p. 345.

is larger even than Geddes's. A more emptily offensive champion of faith, on the scholarly plane, can seldom have been enrolled by the Church. While Geddes was thus treated in England, he found recognition in Germany. Eichhorn, in a Latin letter to Geddes, hailed him as almost the only person whose judgment on his own works he valued (Memoir, p. 543); and the German scholar J. S. Vater partly translated Geddes's 'Critical Remarks' in his 'Commentary on the Pentateuch' (1802–5), thus setting forth what came to be known as the Geddes-Vater hypothesis, a theory of the compilation of the Pentateuch from fragments of the "journals" of Moses, long after his time. This reaction against the "two documents" theory of Astruc and Eichhorn is condemned by Westphal as having had a disastrous influence on the progress of criticism (*Les Sources du Pentateuque*, 1888, i, 142 *sq.*). Mr. W. E. Addis, however, has argued that, while untenable, the Geddes-Vater hypothesis "was in some respects an advance upon Astruc and Eichhorn" (*The Documents of the Hexateuch*, 1892, i, introd. p. xxvii. Cp. Cheyne, *Founders of Biblical Criticism*, pp. 7–10).

The study of the Pentateuch was slowly to proceed on more scientific lines, on which the simple analysis of the documents was at length to show that Moses, if he ever existed in the capacity assigned to him, was neither author nor compiler of the Pentateuch, and that the composition of those and other Biblical books had been a long historic process, all "post-Mosaic." The demonstration, as it proceeded, was noted and employed by the working freethinkers, much more slowly assimilated among the scholarly clergy, and all along as little regarded as possible by the rest and by their flocks. Only after generations could anything like permeation be alleged.

§ 3. *Gospel Study: Marsh and Thirlwall*

Apart from Geddes, English Biblical criticism in the reactionary period is at first avowedly influenced from Germany. Herbert Marsh's translation (1793–1801) of a work of J. D. Michaelis (1717–91), 'An Introduction to the New Testament' (first ed. 1750; rewritten later)—which we have seen described to Crabb Robinson by a German pastor in 1801 as already superseded in Germany by Paulus—sufficed to cause a clerical outcry in England. Marsh, who had studied at Leipzig under Michaelis,[1] had added to his translation a dissertation of his own on the origin of the Synoptic Gospels, in which he recognizes that they are compilations from previous written sources, but explains that the evangelists were saved from error by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

[1] That author in 1741–2 had visited England, and had there been "lifted out of the narrow groove of his earlier education." He translated four sections of Richardson's *Clarissa* and some English theological writings.

Randolph, the then Bishop of Oxford, very rightly, albeit anonymously, insisted that on this view inspiration, as previously understood, disappeared, though the opening avowal of Luke might be held to support the view of Marsh.

Other writers followed up Randolph, to whom Marsh stringently replied ; and much debate on this topic must have gone on in theological circles, for Marsh's work reached a fourth edition in 1823. He had been in 1797–9 an important writer on English finance and on the origination of the war between Britain and France, incurring the animosity of Napoleon ; and it was probably the grateful support of Pitt, who had pensioned him, that enabled him to be elected to the Lady Margaret professorship at Cambridge, which he held till his death. He is said to have been the first theological professor who taught at that university in English ; and his lectures, which were published in various volumes between 1810 and 1823, kept the theological world stirring. Still more stirring were his violent controversies with Calvinists, the Bible Society, and others ; and his conflicts with his clergy after his appointment as Bishop, first of Llandaff (1816) and later of Peterborough (1819). He had certainly set many theologians thinking in his polemical career, which ended (1839) in "a state bordering on imbecility"; but he can hardly be said to have greatly advanced Biblical criticism, save by broaching the critical verdict that the synoptics are compilations, and by calling the attention of British students to the Germans. He must have known much more of German heresy than he ever communicated to his countrymen.

A very different spirit was Connop Thirlwall (1797–1875), who in turn was attracted to New Testament criticism by Schleiermacher. Thirlwall was in the strict sense the most "gifted" churchman of his day. An infant prodigy, he began to learn Latin at three, and read Greek with ease and fluency at four ; and his proud father caused him much adult exasperation by publishing a volume of his compositions when he was eleven. He is one of the few cases in which the higher intellectual faculties have survived, apparently unimpaired, the effects of such premature development. As an undergraduate he added French and Italian to his store of languages : German he acquired some years later. At eighteen he won the Bell and Craven scholarships. J. S. Mill, hearing him speak at a debating society in 1825, while in complete opposition to his views, reckoned him the best speaker he had yet heard, and never afterwards found him surpassed.[1]

Turning aside from the clerical career allotted to him, Thirlwall adopted law in 1820 and was called to the bar in 1825 ; but that avocation in turn repelled him ; and, continuing the German studies to which he was probably led by a friendship with Bunsen, formed at Rome in 1818–9,

[1] *Autobiography*, p. 125.

he produced anonymously translations from Tieck, and, in 1824, a translation of Schleiermacher's 'Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke.' It is his introduction to that essay that brings him into the history of Biblical criticism. In 1827 he reverted to the clerical career, primarily by way of saving his fellowship at Trinity College. In 1834, for supporting the Bill to admit dissenters to university degrees, and speaking severely of the character of the chapel services, he was called upon by the Master, Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, to resign his fellowship, and did so, Brougham promptly compensating him with a living.

His appointment by Lord Melbourne to the modest see of St. David's (1840) is one of the illustrations of theological liberalism among the statesmen of that age. Accused by churchmen like Keble of hating religion, a number of them at least took a tranquil view of "enthusiasm," which was still an accepted term for fanaticism, and were willing to protect churchmen of progressive tendencies.

That Melbourne and some of his Liberal colleagues were free-thinkers has been not uncommonly held (cp. Benn, i, 225). O'Connell in 1834 remarked to Haydon: "One great mistake of the Liberals is their infidelity. Now, there are no infidels in Ireland" (Taylor's *Life of Haydon*, 1853, ii, 351–2). Melbourne's official biographer states that he had been interested in Thirlwall's Introduction to Schleiermacher, and consulted Church authority. Two bishops were doubtful of its orthodoxy, but the Primate was more tolerant. Still, Melbourne told Thirlwall: "I don't intend if I know it to make a heterodox bishop. I don't like heterodox bishops" (Torrens, *Memoirs of Viscount Melbourne*, ed. 1890, pp. 500–1; *Letters of Connop Thirlwall*, 1881, p. 159 *sq.*).

On the other hand there is positive assertion as to Melbourne's unbelief. In Greville's Diary we meet more than once with "Lady Holland's Atheist," Dr. John Allen, otherwise "the universal sceptic." After dinner he is pictured as having[1] "thundered out his invectives against the *charlatanerie* of the Apostles and Fathers and the brutal ignorance of the early Christian converts," till Lord Holland soothingly interposed. "I do not know," writes Greville, in one of the suppressed passages of the Diary (ed. cited, page cited), "whether he believed in the existence of a First Cause, or whether, like Dupuis, he regarded the world as *l'univers Dieu*. Though not, I think, feeling quite certain on the point, he was inclined to believe that the history of Jesus Christ was altogether fabulous or mythical, and that no such man had ever existed." And Allen, who knew Lord Melbourne well, "did not believe that Melbourne entertained any *doubts*, or that his mind was at all distracted and perplexed with much thinking and much reading on the subject, but that his studies

[1] Sept. 19, 1834. New ed. of Diary, by P. W. Wilson, 1927, i, 178.

and reflections have led him to a perfect *conviction* of unbelief" (ed. 1899, iii, 331. Wilson's ed. p. 179; Dec. 16, 1835).[1]

To promote Thirlwall, nevertheless, was a fairly courageous step, though his anonymous manifesto had not involved any breach with official orthodoxy. All the hypotheses as to the compilation of the gospels, he admitted, were irreconcilable with the doctrine of inspiration which made the Biblical writers passive instruments. "This doctrine, however," he adds, "has been so long abandoned that it would now be a waste of time to attack it. When I say it has been abandoned, I mean of course only by the learned; for undoubtedly it is still a generally received notion."[2] Thus to intimate that certain Anglican bishops and most clergymen were not learned was Thirlwall's not least notable audacity.

His own position, however, was to become characteristically Anglican. "The inspiration of Scripture is a necessary and fundamental tenet on which [the Church] *absolutely insists*; but as to the nature and mode of that inspiration she allows her members full liberty of private judgment." His own liberty was considerable in some directions. In a letter of 1817 we find him maintaining that "the Christian religion had introduced with it no innovation at all in ethics; that it had laid down no principle of morality which had not been acknowledged and inculcated by either all or the best of the heathen writers long before"—a proposition repeated by him with emphasis, and put later with almost equal definiteness by Newman. Thirlwall goes on to say that he thinks the opinion "perfectly compatible with a belief in the divine origin of our religion," and that Christianity did either directly or indirectly raise moral practice; "yet I should be not only surprised and perplexed, but to a considerable degree shocked and pained, to discover by any convincing proof that any of its essential doctrines were unknown before that revelation."[3]

In the matter of the bibliography of the synoptics, Thirlwall, who had closely followed the abundant German discussion ensuing on the work of Michaelis, pursues his critical way with marked independence, but never advances far beyond the study of documentary "permutations and combinations" which has been the occupation of the majority of Christian investigators of the gospels ever since. Like all the critics of the period, Schleiermacher included, he is deductive, arguing tirelessly as to what would happen under the circumstances taken for granted. The most significant passage of his introduction is that in which[4] he questions the utility of Paulus's attempts to find natural events under miracle stories. There is no censure; and there is room to surmise that

[1] Allen's further statement that Mackintosh had never held in his life the religious belief which he declared on his death-bed can obviously not be taken as valid evidence.

[2] Introduction cited, pp. xi–xii.

[3] *Letters of Connop Thirlwall*, pp. 37–8.

[4] Pp. cxlvii–ix.

the Englishman no more believes in miracles than does the German, but does not think the latter handles the problem aright. To Schleiermacher's denial of the actuality of the Temptation he makes no objection, though that episode was still being treated as historical by English scholars twenty years later; and he shared his author's doubts about the gospel of Matthew.[1]

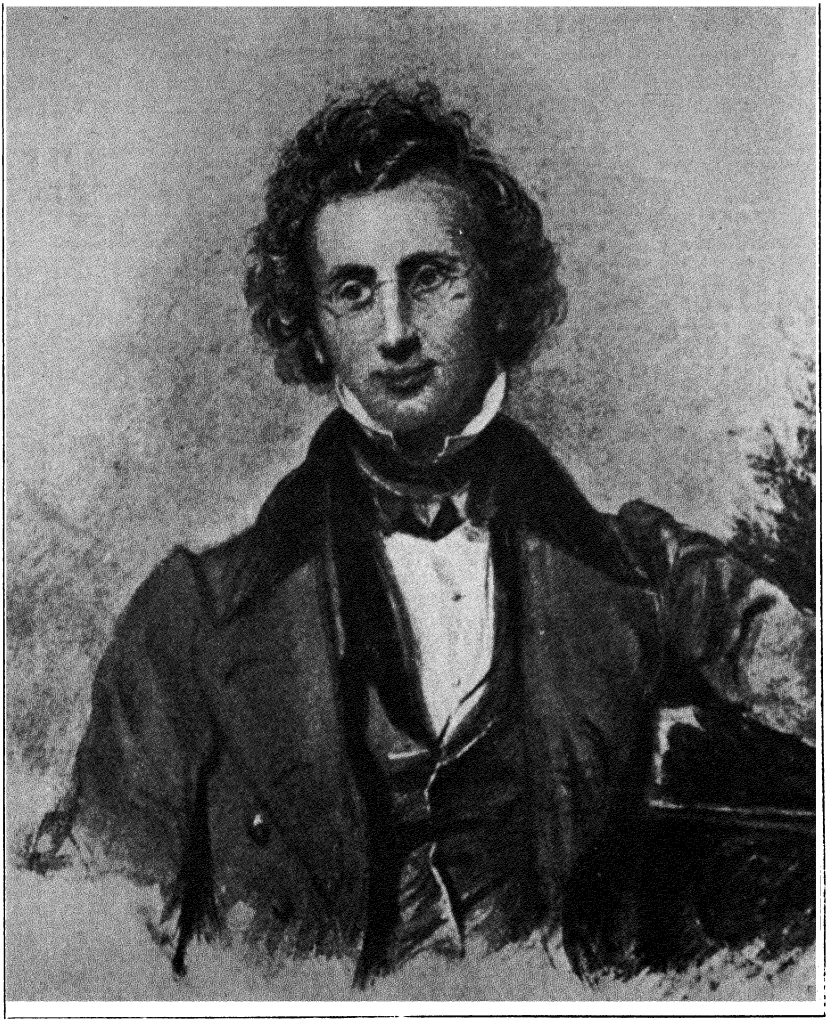
Once established as a bishop, Thirlwall took no further action in Biblical criticism, contenting himself with completing his very meritorious History of Greece and earning admiration as a wise bishop, while showing his old courage in supporting Irish Disestablishment by a famous speech in the House of Lords. His primary command of copious diction, however, is the outstanding feature of his Sermons; and that on 'The Resurrection not Incredible' makes no higher impression. It even descends to the ancient innuendo that doubters on the matter are careless of serious questions, and the only men debated with are "those who, trusting to their own fallible reason, have *argued* themselves into a speculative disbelief of this doctrine."[2] Thirlwall was certainly "orthodox enough" at the close of his career.

§ 4. *Hennell*

He probably gave, however, about the time of his entering the episcopate, a tolerant attention to 'An Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity' (1838), by Charles Christian Hennell (1809–47), which is the first systematic analysis, in English, without animus, of the gospels as historical documents. Bred a Unitarian, under the influence of Belsham and Priestley, Hennell had rejected the Birth Stories, but, like his teachers, stood by the rest of the gospel narratives, barring Trinitarian texts. When, however, one of his sisters married the sturdy Owenite freethinker Charles Bray, and learned with dismay on her honeymoon that his heresy outwent Unitarianism, her brother reluctantly undertook a judicial investigation of the problems involved.[3] The outcome was a conviction that the whole supernatural element in the records must be abandoned on critical grounds.

Hennell's book was written after the publication of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, but without knowledge of that work, and the general coincidence in their conclusions was found surprising by both writers. Hennell had even framed an equivalent for Strauss's Hegelian formula of the ideal Christ as represented by humanity, the Englishman finally positing "in the Universe itself, a Son which tells us of a Father." From Strauss, naturally, the book received a warm welcome when introduced to him by

[1] *Letters*, pp. 80–3.
[2] *Essays, Addresses, and Sermons*, edited by Bishop Perowne, 1880, p. 421.
[3] Bray, *Phases of Opinion and Experience, etc.: An Autobiography* (1884), ch. v; Sara S. Hennell, *A Memoir of Charles Christian Hennell*, 1899, pp. 30–8.



CHARLES CHRISTIAN HENNELL

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his English friend Dr. Brabant; and he promptly had it translated into German, contributing a preface, parts of which retain historical interest:—

> What a free-thoughted voice [so runs Miss Sara Hennell's quaintly literal translation] out of the so theologically stationary, so behind-lagging England, which has lately been giving us the spectacle, in her Reviews, of coming against our critical troops and their modern polished weapons, with arms which with us have been long rusting in the lumber room.[1].....Whence then this clear theological view to our Englishman? From this, that he is not bound to.....the traditional theologic formulary of any English university; that he has not been made a member of the hierarchy of the Established Church, that drag-chain of English manufacture; that he is also not attached clerically to any dissenting party.....
>
> He was not acquainted with what was afforded to the criticism of the gospels in German after Schleiermacher's work on Luke, and only very imperfectly with what preceded. It is only so much the more worthy of note that he shows himself, in the ground position as well as in the leading principles of his investigation, on the very road that has been struck out amongst us in the last years.....
>
> These worthy views which the learned German of to-day has made his own as the fruit of the long pursued.....elaboration of his nation, has this Englishman, to whom the most part of our means of help have been wanting, known how to gain for himself.....In this manner has the author an advantage over us learned Germans.....which has been not the least of the reasons for which I have thought good to make his work accessible to the German public.
>
> He is an Englishman, an English merchant, a man of the world;[2] therefore his is the practical view, the secure tact in the comprehension of actualities, partly inborn, partly cultivated. The problems about which the German first goes round with many learned formalities, our Englishman often manages to seize with a bold grasp on the forelock; he has almost always seen justly, even though his decisions may not always match; and his statement is thought most simple and expressive. Thus he shows his subject to the learned often from a surprisingly new point of view; to the unlearned certainly always from that which is to him most intelligible and attractive.[3]

Hennell's work fully deserves Strauss's praise. Though only twice reprinted (in a second edition in 1841 and, by his sister's action, in 1870), it might at any time during the century have supplied a better introduction to its subject than was furnished by any professional English critic, the more so as it was not more advanced than the results of Strauss. He has no doubts as to the historicity of the gospel Jesus, whom, with

[1] For the German academics, the non-academic freethinking literature of England did not exist. Of Paine's influence Strauss apparently knew nothing. Yet there was actually more *popular* freethought in England than in Germany. Strauss is equally oblivious of the work done by Unitarians.

[2] Hennell, always in weak health, was really a shy and retiring person.

[3] *A Memoir of Charles Christian Hennell*, by Sara S. Hennell, 1899, pp. 55–8. Extracts from George Eliot's translation, embodied in an analysis of the *Inquiry* for John Chapman's Catalogue of publications in 1852, are given in Cross's *George Eliot's Life*, 1-vol. ed. pp. 60–4.

Taylor and De Quincey, he regards as originally an Essene, presenting him (ch. xvi) in summary as "an enthusiast, a revolutionist, a reformer," though he recognizes (3rd ed. p. 333) Paul's "apparent unconsciousness of any sayings of Christ himself bearing upon the subject," and confesses (p. 348) that "the scantiness and mixed nature of the four gospels only permit us, after all, to gain a view far from perfect of the real Jesus." The priority of Mark he cogently contests; and he recognizes the unhistorical character of the fourth gospel, though he accepts it as written in John's old age.

No more candid, patient, or judicial spirit had thus far dealt with the problem in England. Paine's vigorous polemic had been highly provocative, and the forgotten novelist G. W. M. Reynolds, who in 1832 published a violent pamphlet, 'The Errors of the Christian Religion Exposed by a comparison of the gospels of Matthew and Luke,' was much more provocative still. Hennell's merits, in comparison, were obvious alike to the militant freethinkers and to an enlightened few in his own social sphere; but of other public notice he had little apart from Puseyite citations of his "miserable blasphemy." In Germany the book was well received, though ere long superseded by more advanced investigation: at Rome an Italian translation was put on the *Index*. In America it was reviewed carefully and respectfully by Emerson in the *Dial* (1843). At home Unitarians were significantly silent or hostile.[1]

Dr. J. R. Beard, the Unitarian educationist and lexicographer, wrote of Hennell in the preface to his compilation 'Voices of the Church in reply to Dr. D. F. Strauss' (1845, p. xii): "We are not aware that this volume has been *deemed worthy* of any formal answer." The fact was that "the Unitarian ministers had debated the matter and resolved not to allude to the book, lest it should bring it into notice" (*Memoir of Hennell*, p. 110). This was the Unitarian tactic of the time, as indeed it was the Anglican. Dr. W. H. Mill, the "Christian Advocate" of Cambridge University, had written in 1840 that Hennell's book "has excited scarcely any attention here" (*Mill on the Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels*, 1861, p. 32). A book was thus held to be written down by saying: "None of us has attempted to answer it, so it can have little merit." Men not theologically trained can draw the conclusion that to refute Hennell, whose merit was visible to Strauss, was beyond the powers of the orthodoxy of the time.

The method of evasion was pursued in the Establishment even while it was felt necessary to discuss Strauss, whose fame had reached the universities. The Rev. Sanderson Robins, in 'A Defence of the Faith' (1862, pp. 179, 199), twice refers to Hennell as "an infidel writer," without attempting to convict him of either error or deficiency.

[1] *Memoir*, pp. 47–52, 72–5.

Hennell's sister, Sara, is disposed of by the same epithet. Yet the Defence as a whole is devoted to the criticism—sketchy enough certainly—of writers who all come within the "infidel" category. The infidel Strauss is argued against, because he could not in 1861 be ignored. The Hennells could, not having become notorious.

A subsequent work of Hennell's, entitled (after some hesitation) 'Christian Theism' (1839[1]), expressed the author's anxiety to be "constructive," and equally his singularly tolerant attitude towards the most thoroughgoing unbelief, of which in his second preface to the *Inquiry* he speaks as common and "probably increasing." It did not avail, however, to win a large religious repute for one who predicted that ere long there would be "no Christianity but such as expresses the results of the higher moral powers implanted in man by nature."

England was to pass through the Tractarian and other phases of religious revival before there was a large studious audience for scientific thought on fundamental problems; but new personalities were emerging who were to make, in time, a new atmosphere. It was in the circle of the Brays at Coventry that Marian (or Mary Ann) Evans, known to fame as George Eliot (1819–80), who from the age of sixteen to twenty-one, whatever may have been her reaction to Scott, had been intensely evangelical in her opinions and practice, was definitely turned, largely by the influence of Hennell's *Inquiry*, towards the agnosticism which was later to make her the intellectual comrade of Spencer and Lewes. In the way of her remarkably two-sided temperament, she made the transition at once intellectually and emotionally,[2] ardently embracing the new teaching, from which she was to advance still further, yet retaining her power of warm sympathy with those who clung to the old. The majority of her contemporaries who were capacitated for intellectual advance were to make the transition at a slower rate.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer has committed himself (*Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Eng. trans. of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, p. 161) to the statement that "Strauss can hardly be said to have done himself honour by contributing a preface to the translation of Hennell's work, which is nothing more than Venturini's [German] 'Non-Miraculous History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth' tricked out with a fantastic paraphernalia of learning." For this gross aspersion there is not a shadow of foundation. By Dr. Schweitzer's own account of Venturini's inaccessible work [1st ed. 1800–2; 2nd ed. 1806, 4 vols.] "embracing 2,700 pp.," published as at "Bethlehem" (Copenhagen), it is a "fictitious life," which makes Jesus "the tool of a secret order"

[1] Rep. with the *Inquiry* in 1870.

[2] Cross's *Life*, ch. ii. From her youth up, Marian Evans is revealed as a sufferer from imperfect balance between an exceptional brain and an emotional temperament. All through her life she suffered from chronic acute melancholia and intense depression. See Oscar Browning's *Life*, *passim*.

(p. 4), after the fashion of earlier treatises of Bahrdt. Between Schweitzer's own account of Venturini's romance (pp. 44–7) and the actual work of Hennell there is not the faintest resemblance.

That Dr. Schweitzer was wantonly aspersing a book which he had not read is for the present writer the more credible because in the same volume he writes (p. 290, *note*): "According to J. M. Robertson, *Christianity and Mythology* (London, 1900), the Christ-Myth is merely a form of the Krishna-Myth. The whole gospel tradition is to be symbolically interpreted." Such a statement could not possibly have been penned by any intelligent person who had read the book in question, which nowhere has anything like either of the propositions imputed, and expressly negates the first. Dr. Schweitzer's own avowal (pref. to Eng. trans. of *Paul and his Interpreters*, p. xi), that he does not read English, supplies the explanation in this case; but in the case of Hennell he in effect professes to have had the German translation before him.

When one notes, further, how (pp. 97, 112) he rolls into one person Wilhelm Ferdinand Wilcke and Christian Gottlob Wilke, attributing to the latter the *Tradition and Mythe* of the former, one further understands how such allegations as that he makes against Hennell are for him possible. There is no reason to believe that Hennell ever saw the vast romance of Venturini, or even heard of it. There was no English translation; and up to 1838 Hennell did not read German. In any case his book belongs to another order of mental activity. Dr. Schweitzer's final fling, "a *fantastic* paraphernalia of learning," is of a piece with what precedes. His moral credit requires the conclusion that he had not seen the book he calumniated, which is finally not very creditable.

§ 5. *Milman*

Part of the forward impulse was supplied from within the Church of England by the 'History of the Jews'[1] (1829) and the 'History of Christianity' (1840) of Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868), created Canon of Westminster and Rector of St. Margaret's by Peel in 1835, and Dean of St. Paul's by Lord John Russell in 1849. In his youth much addicted to poetry, he ostensibly put himself on safe theological ground in 1827 by his Bampton Lectures on 'The Character of the Apostles as an Evidence of Christianity.' Yet his History of the Jews evoked an abundance of hot censure as conducive to unbelief. Orthodoxy, unlike Unitarianism, has an unhappy habit, often deplored by good churchmen, of forcing on public notice the new departures made by men of its own cloth, thus doing a great deal of "publicity" work for rationalism.

"It may be doubted," writes Dean Stanley in his obituary notice of

[1] Issued as a volume of Murray's 'Family Library.'

Milman, "whether any subsequent tumult or obloquy has been more passionate than that which beset the first appearance of the 'History of the Jews.'" The obloquy may be partly understood as Tory outcry against a Whig, but more largely as sentimental revolt against the almost Gibbonian nonchalance with which Milman set forth early Jewish history as Oriental legend, not of course impugning it, but visibly not believing it with proper Bibliolatrous solemnity. His account of Abraham as "an independent Sheikh or Emir" seems to have given intense offence; and, as Newman noted later in his essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles, the account of Samson exhibits no belief in any miraculous operation.[1]

The reduction of a number of other legendary miracles to natural processes, further, was indignantly denounced as amounting to "infidelity." In the Appendix to a later edition Milman was at pains to show that on the point of the imperfect authority of the Hebrew Scriptures he was amply warranted by Paley, and that in every step of rationalization he had been anticipated or outgone by distinguished divines, by Jortin, by Calmet, by Bishops Patrick and Pococke and Wilson, by Stackhouse—nay, by the Family Bible of the S. P. C. K. He was to learn that in theology many grave authorities may steal the horse while a jaunty newcomer must not look over the fence.

Though Stanley's account of Milman as effecting "the first decisive inroad of German theology into England" must be qualified by noting that it was not the first, and was not decisive, he is to be remembered as having helped to introduce a measure of the critical spirit into the English religious world of his age. This he did in particular by his not very searching History of Christianity (1840), which, while evading the problem of miracles, indicated clearly enough the now growing recognition that Christianity was in large part a "natural" embodiment of many prior Oriental doctrines. And here again the dangerousness of the new ideas was forced on the public notice by pious pens—this time in particular by the criticism of Newman, the Anglican side having at this stage decided to adopt the tactic of silence.

Newman's account[2] of the critical content and tendency of Milman's book is curiously aggressive. He insists on the disturbing elements without denying the truth of the statements he cites, and with no apparent consciousness that, if the inferences which he indicates as properly arising are drawn, he has discredited his own creed. As he puts it, Milman indicates facts "admitted on all hands"—to wit, that the doctrine of the Logos is Platonic; that of the Incarnation Indian; that of a divine Kingdom Judaic; that of angels and demons [and of a Mediator] Persian; that the connection of sin with the body is Gnostic; the idea of a new birth Chinese and Eleusinian; that of sacramental virtue Pytha-

[1] *Essays on Miracles*, ed. 1873, p. 168.
[2] *Essays, Critical and Historical*, 7th ed. ii, 214 *sq.*

gorean ; that of the Trinity common to East and West ; and the rites of baptism and sacrifice equally ubiquitous.[1]

Milman was in fact arguing, as Maurice did later,[2] that Christianity was an adaptation of the best elements in older faiths ; and all that Newman could say in objection was to suggest that the ideal "Catholic" Church could dispose of the difficulty, whereas Protestantism could not. In point of fact, Newman was contending that by the application of Milman's methods all Christian beliefs would gradually be dissolved. This Newman could see, and Milman ostensibly did not. Yet Newman had no solatium to offer save the adoption of a Catholic formula which had no more rational validity than Milman's. The upshot was that belief could subsist only by the abandonment of rational reflection ; and that conclusion, thus enforced, was at least as damaging to Catholicism as to Protestantism.

When, turning from togate narrative to critical discussion, Milman guardedly faces his problems in the appendices to his first Book, he reveals small religious conviction. It is, in fact, hardly possible to read his third appendix without inferring that he had no more belief in the gospel stories than in those of Genesis and Judges. "Whether then," he writes, "these were actual appearances or impressions produced on the mind of those who witnessed them, is of slight importance. In either case, they are real historical facts." That is to say, the occurrence and acceptance of a delusion is, as such, as real a historical fact as any objective phenomenon. That postulate is bound up with a theorem of Divine Plan, to the effect that Deity may very well have chosen to lead mankind by benevolent deception, as any priest might.

The question then arises whether Milman's doctrine of Deity was anything more than a forensic case, suited to the official situation. Long before Dean Mansel forced on the academic world the antithesis between the incogitable Absolute of theological philosophy and the Personal God of popular theology, Milman writes that "From the necessity of the case there *must* be some *departure from* the pure and essential spirituality of the Deity, in order to communicate with the human race." As who should say : "We are committed to alleging a Revelation : our historical teaching, then, must be adjusted to that notion all along the line. Within the pale of Christianity, Deity must be supposed to have foreplanned all the machinery required for its acceptance. As to the corollary that the resulting unbelief was equally foreplanned, we must just say nothing."

The first appendix, dealing with Strauss, is on the same forensic plane. With perfect amenity, the Dean admits the skill of the "remorseless logic" of the German critic,[3] and proceeds to argue (*a*) that Strauss's

[1] *Id.* p. 231.

[2] Boyle Lectures on *The Religions of the World*, 1846, p. 223 and *passim*.

[3] Mansel, who was a very skilful practitioner in his way, took the course (*Bampton Lectures*, Note xlvi) of picking out all the least impressive of Strauss's cavils.

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formula of an ideal Christ, and an ideal abstraction of narrative and doctrine, is an intangible substitute for Christian faith, and (*b*) that the Resurrection must have been believed-in before the asserted myths could have been grafted on the story. Tranquilly evading the problem of the actuality of the Resurrection, the apologist argues that the other so-called myths are either not properly so named, or are matters of subordinate importance. Christian faith, accordingly, had much better adhere to the usual positions, since on that basis the rise of the Church is intelligible, whereas on the other it is not.

Had Newman grounded his protest on those critical appendices, he might have made, for practical purposes, a much more damaging attack. They are certainly not the utterance of faith; and as an apparatus of critical method they are merely forensic. The adoption of the "oral" theory of the origin of the gospels, which had been made effectively current by Gieseler, leads Milman to an exposition which not merely dismisses every shred of the concept of inspiration but sets up a quite incogitable theory of the supposed process. On the other hand, Milman's fashion of avowing the now general difficulty of believing in miracles,[1] while arguing, very much on the plane of Paley, that the miracles made the "moral and spiritual part" of the creed "credible" for the first Christians, almost vetoes the notion that he believed the miracles had ever happened.

That Newman did not fasten on this fundamentally sceptical procedure is suggestive of his own uneasiness. Milman, speaking as an unbelieving cardinal might have done, placidly remarks that "Christianity will survive the criticism of Dr. Strauss." The answer is that Strauss has survived the criticism of Milman; and that Milman's tactic of relying on the supernatural side of the Christian case, while acknowledging the embodiment of pagan creeds in the Christian, is now abandoned by his fellow churchmen. He posited the Resurrection as "the basis of the Christian religion," and accordingly took it for granted. To-day the scholars of his Church stake its case on the historicity of a Man Jesus, who cannot have risen from the dead.

Between them, Milman and Newman must have detached a good many intelligent readers from the faith, in a simpler and less laborious fashion than that of Hennell—without, indeed, doing anything in the nature of exact Biblical criticism at all. As much as they did, and more, had been done for laymen by the indecorous Robert Taylor in his *Diegesis* and *Devil's Pulpit*. But Milman had usefully shown that in the land of Gibbon, in the thick of reaction, it was still possible even for a university man and a priest to draw some rational inferences in the field of religion and religious history as they were being drawn in the fields of economics, jurisprudence, politics, and science, by men who had not gone through the Oxford mill.

[1] App. III, end of first par.

Nay, he had so far argued his case, even in his text, as to set thinking men asking whether he believed his own doctrine. After declaring in so many words that "no religion is in its origin mythic,"[1] and thus implying, if anything, the deistic view of "natural religion," he grounded Christianity on the Resurrection, and then ascribed to that tale not only the merit of stabilizing the belief in immortality but that of supplying "the foundation of all the moral good wrought under Christian auspices."[2] For men who saw and said, with Thirlwall and Newman, that all true moral principles were common property before Christianity arose, the latter claim can have carried no weight; and for men abreast of such knowledge the entire case put by Milman was recognizably a sacerdotal convention. And this conclusion was in keeping with the whole defensive procedure.

Milman had ignored Hennell, as a non-academic person whom English university men would not read, though Strauss thought well of him; while it was expedient to "answer" Strauss, whom university men knew to be much discussed abroad. Besides, Strauss untranslated would have hardly any English readers. Newman ignored alike Hennell and Strauss, who had better remain unknown to Anglican acolytes; while Milman had to be antagonized, as inevitably coming in their way. All this was in conformity with the established English principle of leaving disturbing novelties of doctrine undiscussed until it has been ascertained how many people have been disturbed, there being always a hope that the thing may be hushed up.

Only gradually was the hand of the clerisy forced. In 1840 the "Christian Advocate" of Cambridge University, H. J. Rose, began a series of pamphlets which were ultimately collected (1861) under the title of 'Observations on the Attempted Application of Pantheistic Principles to the Theory and Historic Criticism of the Gospels, being the Christian Advocate's Publications for the years 1840–4.' These, being ponderous in style as well as in matter, seem to have "attracted little notice," as its author would say; and probably not much more stir was made by the appearance in 1841 of 'German Anti-Supernaturalism: Six Lectures on Strauss's *Leben Jesu*' by Philip Harwood (1809–87), who had been associated with Hennell in a short-lived scheme for a London chapel mission, financed by Mr. Barker Beaumont, to give out a "Natural Religion" of theism, with a liturgy.[3] But Harwood, who for a time had been the assistant of W. J. Fox, was destined to find his haven as "the admired editor of the *Saturday Review*."

Harwood's career is noteworthy. Studying at Edinburgh University, he found himself undesignedly led to Unitarianism by the lectures of Dr. Chalmers. After a contentious experience as a

[1] Book I, App. I to ch. ii. [2] Book II, ch. i.
[3] Details as to hymns, etc., in the *Memoir* of Hennell.

Unitarian preacher at Bridport and Edinburgh, in the course of which he gave up belief in miracles, he joined Fox, thence passing on to the Beaumont Institution, at Mile End. There trouble arose, as Miss Hennell relates, over the "Reckless Unorthodoxy of Mr. Harwood," who had found initial difficulty with the Manual of devotions compiled by the founder. On the closing of the Institution by the son of the deceased founder in 1843, Harwood turned journalist, and after serving on the *Examiner* and the *Morning Chronicle* followed his chief, who on the decease of the last-named journal founded the *Saturday*.

Of that quickly-rising periodical he was sub-editor till 1868, and thereafter editor till his retirement in 1883. It thus came about that the powerful journal which for the poet James Thomson ("B. V."), a left-wing freethinker, was the embodiment of every anti-progressive ideal (see art. in *Poems, Essays and Fragments*, 1892, pp. 224–35), and for the right-wing rationalist, Professor Henry Sidgwick, represented (1885) "a dominant tone of conceited orthodoxy and cynical worldliness" (*Henry Sidgwick: A Memoir*, 1906, p. 401), had for thirteen years been sub-edited and for fifteen years conducted by the freethinker and free-trader who had first introduced Strauss to English readers. Among his contributors, further, had been such freethinkers as John Morley and Fitzjames Stephen. (See ch. xiii, hereinafter.)

Still the tide of heresy advanced. In 1842, before George Eliot's translation had been begun, the *Leben Jesu* of Strauss was appearing in an English edition, published by Hetherington, in weekly parts, at a penny,[1] "to satisfy," says a Unitarian divine, "the truly infidel cravings of a portion of our town populations."[2] At the same time it is confessed that similar cravings have affected other classes, and that "in this country no scholarlike translation has been published, though several[3] have been prepared; the booksellers having had the fear of the laws before their eyes." In a year's time, however, appeared the very competent and scholarlike translation of George Eliot, begun by Miss Brabant, but passed on by her, on her marriage to Hennell, for completion by her friend.[4]

As to that, if there were any thoughts of prosecution, even the

[1] *Oracle of Reason*, i, 239; ii, 119; *Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*, 1845, pp. xiii, 15. The translation appears to have been made from the French version of Littré (1839). Beard pronounces it worthless, but cites only one geographical blunder. He himself makes a bad biographical blunder on his first page with reference to Schleiermacher and Strauss.

[2] Beard, *Voices of the Church*, as cited, p. 15.

[3] This follows Dr. Mill: "More than one version has been offered for publication to the London booksellers—the apprehended distaste of our general reading public conspiring [*sic*] with higher motives to prevent acceptance of the offer" (Work cited, p. 2).

[4] Cross's *Life*, pp. 75–6.

Anglican authorities of early Victorian England could see that it was much wiser to say nothing than to give the book the supreme advertisement of legal suppression. The translation had no great sale; and it was left to a stirring Unitarian scholar to compile, chiefly from German sources, the first volume of anti-Strauss polemic in English, thereby, probably, giving wider currency to the ideas of Strauss than they would otherwise have attained in contemporary England.

§ 6. *Strauss*

A new epoch, meantime, had been inaugurated in Germany, through the so-called 'Life of Jesus' (1835) by David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74), the most famous writer of his century in the field of hierology. In the preparation of that critic for his task were involved all the main forces of the German intellectual life of the previous generation—scholarly, critical, philosophical, and romantic. In his own account of his youth[1] we see him, at the Protestant theological seminary in the old Swabian monastery of Blaubeuren, in no wise the scientific investigator of the next decade but a romantic enthusiast, at first averse from all such severe analytical thinking as Kant's, deeply stirred by Schleiermacher, zealous for the kindred thought of the pantheist Schelling, enamoured of poetry,[2] of fantastic romance, of the mysticism of Jacob Boehme, even of the spiritualistic lore which Kant in the previous age had derided and dismissed. Yet the evolution was quite sequent, the transition being made through the influence of Hegel.[3]

What philosophy was doing for German critical thought was to detach young minds from the discredited routine of dogmatic clerical religion to the enterprise of thinking anew the cosmic problem. The procedure was of necessity verbalist rather than scientific, but it broke the spell of dogma, superseding the concept of Revelation by that of a vision of the universal life in terms of immanent Spirit. Such an effort was partly involved in the intuitionist theology of Schleiermacher; by Hegel it was sought to be raised to the status of a logical dialectic, by which all mental life was shown to be the realization of what Emerson called the Over Soul. From that standpoint all belief in theological "miracle" disappeared as completely as it did from the thought of the thoroughgoing men of science. Thus did Schleiermacher pilot the strongest of his flock towards agnosticism.

It was after completing, with distinction, his training as a theological student at the university of Tübingen, and winning actual popularity as a *vikar* or curate at a village near his birthplace, Ludwigsburg, that

[1] In his Life of Märklin, drawn on by Zeller, *D. F. Strauss in seinem Leben und seinen Schriften*, 1874.

[2] Zeller gives one very melodious poem by the young Strauss, p. 14.

[3] Cp. the *Literarische Denkwürdigkeiten*, in the *Kleine Schriften*, 1876, p. 12.

Strauss went in 1831 to Berlin to see and hear Hegel; and it was at the house of Schleiermacher there that he received the news of the sudden death of Hegel from cholera. "It was on his account that I came here!" cried the young man, to the "visible dissatisfaction" of his host,[1] between whom and Hegel there had been no confraternity. The study of Hegel's works, however, completed the detachment of the young Strauss from the "personal" religion of his earlier mentor.[2] In four years was to come the *Leben Jesu*, the beginning of the end of the Schleiermacher influence.

As Strauss later avowed, he had served a very short apprenticeship to his task.[3] But at Blaubeuren, and thereafter at Tübingen, he had studied under F. C. Baur, one of the greatest workers in a land then unmatched for mental industry; and, stirred by that example, he rapidly mastered the already large literature of German investigation of the gospels. Rarely has so young an explorer so quickly surveyed a difficult territory.

The *Leben Jesu* at once made him famous. Among his first writings had been short criticisms of theological books, one (1834) being a review of three studies on the origin of the first canonical gospel.[4] This revealed critical grasp, but gave small hint of the book that was already on its way. That was to be, not a bibliographical study of the gospels as documents but a 'Life of Jesus, Critically Handled'—a study of the whole gospel *history*, tried by the tests of science and consistency, in which all miracle was to be regarded as unhistorical, and all vital contradiction as decisive against credibility. It was thus to make clear that a 'Life of Jesus' *could not* really be written. From Eichhorn he had learned that miracle stories are not to be disposed of as real events misunderstood.

At the same time, the book was to conform, as far as might be, to the Hegelian doctrines of the immanence of the universal Spirit and the superiority of Christianity to all other religions in its presentation of the highest example of Spirit in Jesus. As might have been expected, the "constructive" purpose won little favour as against the shock of the "destructive" one.

In contrast with the work of Hennell, the *Leben Jesu* of Strauss made a resounding and permanent impression throughout Europe; and, when translated into English by Marian Evans (1846), certainly exceeded Hennell's book in its disturbing influence in this country. Hitherto all destructive analysis of the gospel records had been regarded by the mass

[1] Zeller, p. 26.

[2] As Strauss notes (*Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, 1839, p. 36), Schleiermacher always held fast to the *Person* of Christ. Cp. Zeller, pp. 26–7, as to Strauss's reaction against Schleiermacher's lecture on the Life of Jesus.

[3] *Denkwürdigkeiten*, as cited, p. 4.

[4] *Charakteristiken*, p. 235 *sq.*

even of educated Christians as a continuation of the work of the "infidel" deists of France in the previous century; and only in the curiously detached academic world of Germany was there anything like a common conviction that tradition had been radically undermined. Nor had the procedure conformed to any clear principle of documentary criticism.

There had been, indeed, a check to the few attempts which had been made at clearing the ground by removing the Fourth Gospel from the historical field. Lessing had taken this gospel as peculiarly historical, as did Fichte and Schleiermacher and the main body of critics after him. Only in England (by Evanson) had the case been thus far more radically handled. In 1820 Bretschneider, following up a few tentative German utterances, put forth, by way of hypothesis, a general argument in Latin,[1] to the effect that the whole presentment of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is irreconcilable with that of the Synoptics, that it could not be taken as historical, and that it could not therefore be the work of the Apostle John.[2] The result was a general discussion and a general rejection. The innovation in theory was too sudden for assimilation: and Bretschneider, finding no support, later declared that he had been "relieved of his doubts" by the discussion, and had thus attained his object. It was left to Strauss to re-open the case by insisting on the quantity of unhistorical matter in the fourth gospel as in the synoptics, using each in turn against the others.

But as regards the gospel history in general, the first *Leben Jesu* is a great "advance in force" as compared with all preceding work. Himself holding undoubtingly to the assumption of the rationalizing school that the central story of Jesus and the disciples and the crucifixion was history, Strauss yet applied the mythical principle systematically to most of the episodes, handling the case with the calmness of a great judge and the skill of a great critic. At his hands the manifold theories, hypotheses, and solutions of his predecessors are sifted and weighed, one by one, with an unwearying tension of scrutiny that had never been equalled in that field. Paulus's principle of reducing every miracle to a simple event misunderstood he effectively dismisses, finding a better clue in the obvious adaptation of Old Testament stories to Jesuine purposes. Every step is made with the vigilance and the coolness of a geologist studying strata—a procedure thus far adumbrated only by the best of the prior German investigators. This was, further, the best sample of good writing in German theology[3] since Schleiermacher. The result was, for many, a

[1] *Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistolarum Joannis Apostoli indole et origine.*

[2] It is thus inaccurate—Strauss himself being the witness—to say, as does Dr. Conybeare (*Hist. of N. T. Crit.* p. 107), that Strauss was the first German writer to discern the unhistoricity of the fourth gospel. His task was to show the unhistorical character of the gospels in general.

[3] "A beauty of diction, a felicity and lucidity of statement such as had hitherto been almost unknown in German scientific work" (Zeller, p. 40).

kind of impression akin to that made by a scientific demonstration. It is only in the light of the labours of the hundreds of scholars who have since explored the ground that Strauss can be seen to be at important points inadequate or inconclusive.

The very thoroughness of Strauss's performance, however, set up a new energy of reaction—a thing he appears not to have anticipated. Himself devoid of theological heat, he had not reckoned on a violent display of it in an arena in which so much disintegrating criticism had already appeared; and he had, he thought, disarmed bigotry by a quasi-philosophic concession. After showing that most of the gospel narrative was mere myth, and leaving the rest problematical, he saw fit to begin and end, on his Hegelian principles, with the announcement that in effect nothing really mattered—that the *ideal* Jesus, the incarnation of the divine in humanity at large, was unaffected by historic analysis, and that it was the ideal that counted.[1] In a world in which nine honest believers out of ten held that the facts mattered everything, there could be no speedy or practical triumph for a demonstration which thus announced its own inutility. Strauss had attempted for New Testament criticism what Kant and Fichte and Hegel had sought to compass for religious philosophy in general, ostensibly proffering together bane and antidote. As in their case, however, so in his, the truly critical work had an effect in despite of the theoretic surrender. Among instructed men, historical belief in the gospels has never been the same since Strauss wrote; and he lived to figure for his countrymen as one of the most thoroughgoing freethinkers of his age. In his own day, from the outset, he was regarded as aiming at the annihilation of the whole substance of the 'Life of Jesus' as men conceived it, with the reservation of a "thin historical thread" of very little consequence.[2]

The immediate effect of his massive work, in his own country, was a battery of criticism unparalleled in its literary annals. Alike for the empirical rationalists who turned miracles into mere misconceptions of real events, and the believers who held by miracles as such, he was a wrecker. Somewhat shaken by the storm, he made certain concessions to his more liberal critics in the second and third editions which were soon called for. These included admissions about the effect of the "Personality" of Jesus, on the lines of the latter-day à priori argument for the historicity—a kind of inference partly justified by Strauss's own à priori thesis that the gospels had been built up by the "consciousness of the community." That remains one of the weaknesses of his scheme as a whole. But, realizing that in his concessions he was paltering with his critical method, and weakening his case, he withdrew most of them in the fourth edition (1840). In the meantime he had produced a series

[1] *Das Leben Jesu*, pref. to first ed. *end*; and *Dissertation* at end of book.
[2] Tholuck, *Glaubwürdigkeit der evang. Geschichte*, 1838, p. 17.

of 'Controversial Papers,'[1] dealing, sometimes very ably, with his chief opponents.

The impulse for these had been supplied not only by the multitude of critical attacks but by his personal experience. At the time of the issue of the first volume of the *Leben Jesu*, he held a teaching post (as *repetent*) at Tübingen, having lectured up to 1833 with great acceptance on the history of philosophy and ethics. At once, on the appearance of his book, he was removed from his university post and given one as teacher in the lyceum of Ludwigsburg. Here, residing with his parents, he had to face the bitter religious hostility of his father and the consequent distress of his gentle mother, till in 1836 he withdrew to Stuttgart to give himself up to literary work. This included a long essay on 'Schleiermacher and Daub,'[2] published in the 'Characteristics and Critiques' (1839), in which he is still much concerned to effect a concordat with the Christians on the grounds of the necessity of religion and the pre-eminence of Christ as the religious teacher *par excellence*.

A glimpse of a teaching career on such lines was suddenly opened to him in that year by the offer, from the then ultra-liberal government of Zurich, of a professorship of theology in the university of that town, which he accepted. But the mere announcement evoked a tempest of pious indignation, clerically organized, which compelled the cancelling of the appointment—with a compensation in the form of a pension—and the episode culminated in the Zurich revolution of 1839.[3]

That closed for Strauss all hope of a professorial career. In 1839 his mother died; and his father's death followed in 1841. In 1840–1 appeared a new *magnum opus* from his pen—a compendium of 'Christian Dogmatic Doctrine,[4] in its Historical Evolution and in Conflict with Modern Science,' no less massive than the *Leben Jesu*, and no less powerful. This, however, won no such vogue as the other. It was a masterly sequel to the first book, expounding with admirable learning the principle that "the true criticism of dogma is its history"; but the decisive work had already been done in so far as he could achieve it. The *Leben Jesu* was a shattering attack on the capital of the faith: this was but a reduction of the outlying fortresses. One wit observed that it was to a body of doctrine as a cemetery to a city. The new book made no wide sensation, and, as Strauss tells us, sold very slowly. For over twenty years he abandoned his polemic, leaving his books to do their work, and employing himself in critical research of other kinds.

[1] *Streitschriften zur Vertheidigung meiner Schrift über das Leben Jesu und zur Charakteristik der gegenwärtigen Theologie*, 1837.

[2] Daub being Schleiermacher's ablest theological antagonist.

[3] Hausrath gives an elaborate record of both episodes.

[4] *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft.* There had been several previous German surveys, of good scholarly quality.

§ 7. *Baur*

The most eminent name among the contemporaries of Strauss in the first half of the century, in the field of the study of Christian origins, is that of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), whom we have seen as one of Strauss's teachers. In his pupil's retrospect he is a figure of austere energy and massive erudition, wholly devoted to the life of study. As an author he emerged for the German public in 1824–5 with a large but immature work on *Symbolik und Mythologie*; in 1831 with a study of the Mandaean religious system and a treatise on *Die Christuspartei*—that is, the party who as against Paul declared themselves followers of Christ;[1] in 1832 with a study on Apollonius of Tyana, and in 1835 with one on 'The Christian Gnosis,' which, with the others, marks his lifelong preoccupation with an evolutionary conception of Christianity, grounded in his Hegelianism.

Up to 1847 he was further mainly occupied with a series of works on the conflicting positions of Catholicism and Protestantism and on Christian dogma, which culminated in his very learned 'Text-book of Christian Dogma-history' in 1847. In that period, however, he also worked on the problems of the Epistles, producing a treatise on the Pastorals in 1835 and an important and comprehensive study on 'Paul the Apostle' in 1845. Not till 1847, in the same year with the *Dogmengeschichte*, appeared his important 'Critical Investigations of the Canonical Gospels,' which, with his 'Christianity and the Christian Church of the First Three Centuries' (1853) and his great 'Church History' in four more volumes (1859–62), constitutes his most powerful contribution to the critical problem.

No one has ever excelled him in continuity of critical and historical labour on a high plane of concentration; and only Strauss outwent him in force of impact on the intellectual world of his time. Some have classed him high above Strauss in importance; and he certainly covered by far the larger field; but his decisive contribution to the study of Christian origins is rather complementary to than subversive of Strauss's. Like his pupil, he had begun as an admirer of Schleiermacher, and passed on to Hegel, but in his own way. In his 'Investigations of the Canonical Gospels,' acknowledging the unparalleled effect of the *Leben Jesu*, and praising the handling, he argues that Strauss had discussed the gospel history without the proper preparatory study of the relations of the gospels to each other, and, treating them as on one plane, had dismissed the bulk of their matter as myth without showing any decisive reason for accepting as history what was left. The latter criticism was just and important, and was never adequately met. But Strauss, in his turn, was entitled to reply that Baur had investigated the gospels

[1] I Cor. i, 12.

without investigating the gospel history as a whole; and had so given a new lead to the swarm of professional scholars who spent themselves on endless argument as to which gospel came first, and who was borrower or originator, in careful disregard of the problem, What is true?

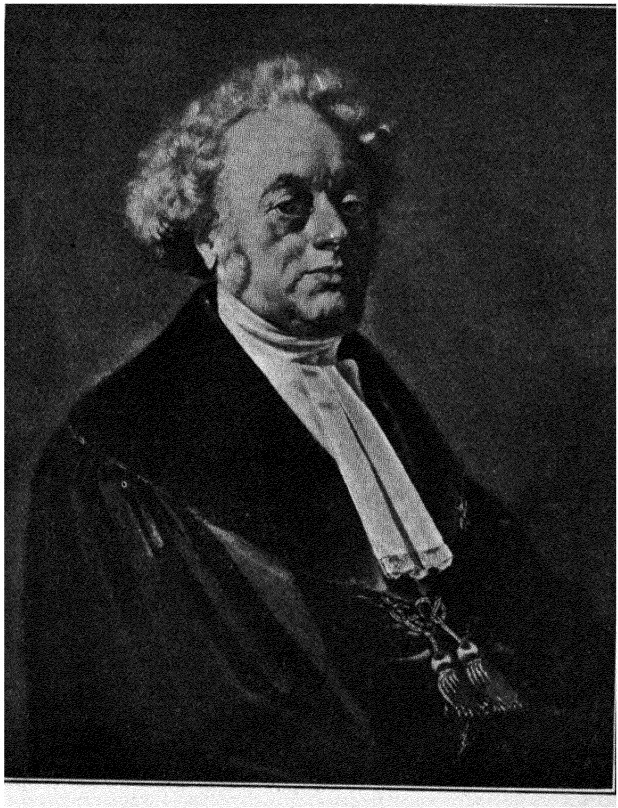
This came of Baur's philosophic and professional preparation and his resulting cast of mind. Both men had been trained as theologians, and wrote for theologians; and where Strauss had hoped to conciliate his congeners with the bi-frontal thesis of an ideal Jesus who symbolized the Incarnation of the Divine in Man, Baur, the more religious of the two in virtue of his lifelong function as a theological teacher, dwelt (as many so-called rationalists had done) on the spiritual and uplifting value of the Jesuine teaching, while no more believing in the supernatural than did Strauss. Strauss was bent on expelling from religion the whole supernatural apparatus; Baur, equally a naturalist, was preoccupied rather with the tracing of the evolution of the religious idea on the one hand, and of the concrete Christian system on the other.

Thus, on a broad contrast, Baur figures as a great historical critic who, labouring as a theological professor, exhibited Christianity in terms of a Hegelian and a scientific view of all life as a natural evolution, without ever plainly saying that the historical Christian creed was a delusion. Strauss, going straight towards his critical goal, reaped his due reward in a compound of fame as a freethinker and execration as a destroyer of faith. Baur, earning much less of general vituperation, created an influential school of neo-rationalistic students of Christian origins, but has for his part suffered latterly in fame from the belittlement of the later Neo-Unitarian orthodoxy. That school, following him in surrendering the miraculous, seeks uneasily to escape the consequences of his demonstration—so unhelpful to the "Personality" thesis—that the early Church was long and deeply divided between its Judaizing and Gentilizing movements.

That was in reality Baur's most important thesis. He did not originate it, having avowed[1] that the question had first been put clearly and in the light of the issues involved by the unknown author of *Die Evangelien, ihre Verfasser und ihre Verhältniss zu einander* (Leipzig, 1845), whom Baur considered to have put the opposition, as exhibited in Matthew and Luke, too broadly. In reality, Baur never realized the full scope of his thesis; nor did Strauss, who had partly forestalled it.[2] Both, assuming the fundamental historicity of the story of the Founder, failed to realize that the early and long-lasting strife between Judaic and Gentile Christism is incompatible with their conception of the teaching and personality of Jesus, and have left to posterity the complete historical reconstruction.

[1] Note to *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, Eng. trans. i, 77. This part of the note is not in the first edition of the German original, *Das Christenthum*, etc., 1853.

[2] E.g., *Leben Jesu*, § 68.



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While, however, the professional scholars could proceed to minimize the facts, reducing them to a short-lived strife between Peter and Paul, and refusing to see the protracted play of the two forces in central portions of the gospel narratives and in the Acts, Baur exercised a permanent influence by his treatment of the problem of the fourth gospel, to which he devoted the bulk of his 'Critical Investigations on the Canonical Gospels.' Strauss could justly claim to have given him his cue; but he took it in his own way. In his characteristic fashion he set himself to realize and to show how the fourth gospel came to be written by one who was certainly not an apostle and yet distinctly suggested that he was. It was an inquiry after Baur's own heart.

In all his studies of religious history, his dominating aim is to enter into the thought of the period and the persons he is considering, seeking to be humanist at least as much as theologian. Thus in his studies of Apollonius of Tyana, of Socrates and Christ and the 'Christian' element in Plato, in his examination of the polemic of Celsus against Christianity, he is notably sympathetic with the pagan attitude, though, being first and last a Protestant theologian, he cannot get rid of his professional presuppositions. Thus he weakly enough argues that the polemic of Celsus proves him to have had no such sense of philosophic superiority to the Christian movement as he professed. The argument in effect denies confident conviction to all who attack what they consider a pernicious delusion.

But Baur stands head and shoulders above all theologians who had thus far dealt with the struggle between Paganism and Christianity. To compare his view of Socrates with that of Priestley a generation before (to say nothing of the orthodox retort on Priestley) is to realize how much the German philosophic movement had done to enlarge men's minds. It was in the same tolerant spirit that he envisaged the fourth gospel as the deliberate fabrication of an idealist following the long-established practice of his age in setting forth his ideals by means of fiction in a pseudepigraphic work.

The result was that, while believing theologians naturally retorted indignantly that he was defending one whom he showed to be an impostor, and glorifying a pious fraud, the cooler professional scholars began to see that the respectful abandonment of the fourth gospel as an essentially and purposively idealizing work was the prudent course. Its unhistorical character had been made more completely clear by Baur's sympathetic treatment than by Strauss's criticism; and thenceforth it became the tactic of the Neo-Unitarian school who, especially after Renan, were to become dominant in the scholarly field, to set "John" aside and concentrate on the synoptics as the only way of showing or saving the historicity of Jesus.

Of Baur, accordingly, it may be said, as of Strauss, that the mass of all subsequent scholarly investigation exhibits his influence. The fact

that he and Strauss agreed in rejecting the claim for the priority of Mark, the chosen Neo-Unitarian gospel, serves to discredit them critically only while that claim is persisted in. As a matter of fact, their arguments have never been rebutted. When, as seems likely, the claim is dissolved by later investigation, their resistance will stand to their critical credit, though their positions will probably be merged in a larger theory of Christian origins, more "destructive" and at the same time more constructive than anything they had conceived.

On the other hand, both were inhibited in important respects by some of the presuppositions of their theological groundwork. Neither applied consistently the critical principles which underlay his best work. Strauss, as Baur saw, reached no principle of historical proof as apart from deletion of the supernatural and notation of religious myth. Baur, on his part, did not adequately apply to the synoptics the principles by which he explored the purposive fiction of the fourth gospel. His declaration that the Sermon on the Mount *must* be authentic was really no more critical than similar fulminations on behalf of "John." Equally uncritical were Strauss's assumption that the gospels were produced by the "community," and his pronouncements as to the solid historicity of episodes such as the Betrayal, and of the central personage.

But such arbitrariness was to be the note of the whole professional inquiry throughout the century; and no one in that field transcended Strauss and Baur in either rectitude or fortitude, insight or grasp, though Wellhausen is their peer. No two minds of their stature, in short, emerged after them in the historico-critical field; and the determining cause may well have been the effect of their work in opening the eyes of the thoughtful in the new generation to the general incredibility of the Christian creed and the impossibility of an honest compromise with the conditions. The better brains had been warned off.

§ 8. *Undeveloped German Pioneering*

There were, however, alongside of Strauss and Baur critics who sought, not without vision if without equivalent success, to explore beyond their limits. One of these was Bruno Bauer (1809–82), who, after setting out as an orthodox Hegelian, outwent Strauss in the opposite direction. In 1838, as a licentiate, he produced two volumes on *The Religion of the Old Testament*, in which the only critical element is the notion of a "historical evolution of revelation." Soon he had got beyond belief in revelation. In 1840 appeared his *Critique of the Gospel History of John*, and in 1841 his much more disturbing *Critique of the Gospel History of the Synoptics*, wherein there is substituted for Strauss's untenable formula of the "community-mind" working on tradition that of individual literary construction. Here Bauer took a right step; his miscarriage lay in being satisfied with it when there was needed a long exploration.

His miscarriage came of his hasty acceptance of another guess—that of the priority of Mark: a doctrine hastily embraced by all who saw that the gospel without the Birth story was historically more promising than the others on that score. Weisse and Wilke had convinced him that Mark was the first gospel, and Wilke in particular that it was no mere copy of an oral tradition but an artistic construction. As he claimed, this was a much more "positive" conception than Strauss's, which was fundamentally "mysterious."[1] Unfortunately, though he saw that the new position involved the non-historicity of the gospel Jesus, he left his own historic conception "mysterious," giving no reason why the "Urevangelist" framed his romance.[2] Bauer was non-anthropological, and left his theory as it began, one of an arbitrary construction by gospel-makers. Immediately after his book appeared that of Ghillany on *Human Sacrifice among the Ancient Hebrews* (1842), which might have given him clues; but they seem to have had for him no significance.

As it was, his book on the Synoptics raised a great storm; and when the official request for the views of the university faculties as to the continuance of his licence evoked varying answers, Bauer settled the matter by a violent attack on professional theologians in general, and was duly expelled.[3] For the rest of his long life he was a freelance, doing some relatively valid work on the Pauline problem, as to which he notably anticipated Van Manen, but pouring out his ever more perturbed spirit in a variety of political writings, figuring by turns as an anti-Semite (1843), a culture-historian,[4] and a pre-Bismarckian imperialist, despairing of German unity, but looking hopefully to German absorption in a vast empire of Russia.[5] Naturally he found political happiness in 1870,[6] living on, a spent force, to do fresh books on Christian origins,[7] on German culture-history, and on the glories of imperialism.

> The frequency, in Bruno Bauer, of sudden sparks of clear critical perception, never successfully nursed so as to yield an enduring light, makes him a peculiarly interesting figure. Starting as a well-read young theologian and a good evolutionary Hegelian, he has no critical inspirations. Studying Strauss later, he suddenly sees not only the incredibility of the whole record but the inadequacy of the notion of an illiterate "community" producing the gospels. At once, however, he is satisfied with the hypothesis of a fabricating

[1] *Kritik der evang. Gesch. der Synoptiker*, ed. 1846, Vorrede, pp. v–xiii.

[2] Cp. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Eng. trans. of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), p. 147.

[3] Baur, *Kirchengesch. des 19ten Jahrh.*, pp. 388–9. Cp. Schweitzer, pp. 144, 153, and Lichtenberger, pp. 375–6, as to the vehemence of Bauer's polemic in general.

[4] *Gesch. der Politik, Kultur, und Aufklärung des 18ten Jahrh.*, 4 Bde. 1843–5; *Gesch. der französ. Revolution*, 3 Bde. 1847.

[5] *Russland und das Germanenthum*, 1847.

[6] Lichtenberger, p. 378.

[7] *Philo, Strauss, Renan, und das Urchristenthum*, 1874; *Christus und die Cäsaren*, 1877.

"Mark," building a complicated myth out of that very "experience of the community" which Strauss had posited as the basis of the whole. Then, finding the professional world stolidly blind to the baselessness of the orthodox belief, and unchangingly unscrupulous in its defence, he passes into a state of nervous exasperation, from which he never again rises to critical serenity. Finally, he figures as a pathological case.

In our own day, Albert Schweitzer, recognizing both his flaws and his felicities, has extolled (*Quest*, p. 159) Bauer's *Critique of the Gospel History* as "worth a good dozen Lives of Jesus, because his work, as we are only now coming to recognize after half a century, is the ablest and most complete collection of the difficulties of the Life of Jesus which is anywhere to be found." This is substantially just, though Schweitzer is biased in Bauer's favour because the latter had come to Schweitzer's own view that the fundamental element in the gospels is the eschatology, which Schweitzer inserts in the Personality of *his* Jesus. Bauer in reality failed to reach a scientific position very much as Schweitzer has failed, because he never worked out a radical investigation of the whole historic problem, but relied unduly on what should have been only a provisional hypothesis.

Temperamentally he is an extreme case of the frequently arising German theorist propounding an idea in a spirit of intellectual domination, furious at resistance, conscious of quasi-inspired rightness in all his notions, yet varying in these, and finally succumbing to his environment through sheer physiological ebb of energy. Schweitzer, whose brilliant sketch seems to have been written in a series of spurts, first asserts (p. 138) that Bauer's work was simply ignored, and that he "was a pure, *modest*, and lofty character"; later (p. 159) that he "passed practically unnoticed, because every one was preoccupied with Strauss," yet, like Reimarus, "exercised a *terrifying and disabling* influence upon his time." Finally, says the critic, "for his contemporaries he was a mere eccentric."

The correct solution of these varying estimates would perhaps be that Bauer's professional contemporaries were uncomfortably conscious of the unsurmountable character of the difficulties he had raised for them by showing that their chosen ground of Mark was finally a fatal position in respect of the incredibility of *that* record. They were thus much relieved when Bauer's political delirations about Russia made him rank definitely as an eccentric, and when his surrender to Bismarckism ended all in humiliation.

Of Bauer's failure to establish a solid critical position it may be said that his own imperfections of method and temper were more or less responsible. Other original and independent German explorers missed due recognition largely because the bearing and significance of their work

were not recognized by contemporaries, but partly because it was not seen by themselves. Thus the mythologist and Hebraist F. Korn (who wrote as "F. Nork"), in a series of learned and vigorous but rather loosely speculative works,[1] indicated many of the mythological elements in Christianity, and endorsed many of the astronomical arguments of Dupuis, while holding to the historicity of Jesus.[2] He accordingly failed to arrest the attention of the biographers; and is even dismissed in Goldziher's 'Mythology among the Hebrews' as "muddle-headed."

When such theses were in the main ignored, more mordant doctrine was necessarily burked. Such subversive criticism of religious history as Ghillany's *Die Menschenopfer der alten Hebräer* (1842), insisting that human sacrifice had been habitual in early Jewry, and that ritual cannibalism underlay the paschal eucharist, found even fewer students prepared to appreciate it than did the searching ethico-philosophical criticism passed on the Christian creed by Feuerbach. Both made a commotion on their appearance; both were afterwards left alone by the theologians, who saw no gain from a continued discussion. A less scientific student, F. Daumer,[3] who in youth had produced a wildly new hypothesis as to the site of Eden, in 1842 published a treatise on the same lines as Ghillany's (*Der Feuer und Molochdienst*), and followed it up in 1847 with another on the Christian mysteries, nearly as drastic but much less solidly built. A speculative romantic rather than a thinker, he wavered later in his rationalism and avowed his conversion to a species of Catholic faith. Hence a setback for saner thinking on his themes. In France the genial German revolutionist and exile Ewerbeck published, under the titles of *Qu'est ce que la Religion?* and *Qu'est ce que la Bible?* (1850), two volumes of very freely edited translations from Feuerbach, Daumer, Ghillany, Lützelberger (on the simple humanity of Jesus), and Bruno Bauer, avowing that after vainly seeking a publisher for years he had produced the books at his own expense. He had, however, so mutilated the originals as to make the work ineffectual for scholars, without making it attractive to the general public; and there is nothing to show that his formidable-looking arsenal of explosives had much effect on contemporary French thought, which developed on other lines.

The whole German culture-history of the period leaves an impression of a tumultuous upcast of raw intellectual energy, exceeding alike in originality and audacity anything that was then going on in other countries, and exceeding, therefore, the general capacity of assimilation. New

[1] *Mythen der alten Perser als Quellen christlicher Glaubenslehren*, 1835; *Der Mystagog, oder Deutung der Geheimenlehren, Symbole und Feste der christlichen Kirche*, 1838; *Rabbinische Quellen und Parallelen zu neutestamentlichen Schriftstellen*, 1839; *Biblische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments*, 1842; *Der Festkalender*, 1847, etc.

[2] *Der Mystagog*, 1838, p. vii, *note*, and p. 241.

[3] See Nork's preamble on *Hr. Fr. Daumer, ein Kurzweiliger Molochsfänger*, in his *Biblische Mythologie*, Bd. I.

libertarian ideals forced themselves to utterance in company with critical processes which, equally founded in organic impulse, called for a quite independent development. The young athletes of that age had more of the primary spirit of truth than of the chastened spirit of science, as befitted eager natures which found themselves prisoned in an obsolete political system,

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born.

Pre-Bismarckian Germany was wastefully rich in all manner of theoretic construction, building deductions on hypotheses before induction had done its due work. The Development Theory had for two generations inspired speculation in every direction, colouring philosophy, sociology, and Biblical criticism, while the solid historic research of the typical German scholars was but providing material for a sounder synthesis. Meantime it was in theologically backward England that there was being built up, in virtue of another order of gift for research, the ordered evidence that made the philosophic theory of Evolution a firm Science.

Chapter VII

THE RELIGIOUS RESISTANCE, 1820–60

§ 1. *The General Movement*

In Britain in particular, the resistance to new criticism in the early Victorian period was most vigorous in respect of the unexhausted forces of reaction against the Revolution. They are seen underlying the revived traditionary pietism out of which grew the so-called Oxford movement, described by some as a "second childhood" of the religious temperament, analogous to the romantic movement in literature, as seen in Germany and France, but more inclement than that to rational thought. In the eighteenth century the deistic movement had met with a resistance not so much religious as argumentative, on the part of those who paid attention to ideas; and that resistance was so far from being general that by the middle of the century many of the clergy as well as of the educated laity had abandoned dogmatic Christianity. The prevailing aversion from "enthusiasm" which had followed on the troubles of the seventeenth century was in many ways favourable to the critical spirit.

In the reaction against the French Revolution, as we have seen, another temper was at work. Wesley and Whitfield had already given "enthusiasm" a new life; and the school, if we may so term it, of Cowper and Wilberforce and Hannah More created a general ferment of evangelicalism, akin to the older fanaticisms. When this temper reached Oxford, where it was turned to a revived traditionalism, there was generated a pervading hate of everything in the nature of rational criticism, though there was no lack of criticism of recent ecclesiastical practice. The reasoning mood which had grown up in the eighteenth century was in large measure replaced by a fervour and a fanaticism which took faith for granted, and met criticism not with argument but with anger. The faculty of judging evidence, scarce at best, was by the new pietism simply turned out of doors; and the general outcome was a kind of cultus of bigotry, more akin to the sixteenth than to the eighteenth century.

Men and women who had been solemnly taught from infancy to believe in the six-days creation, Adam and Eve and the serpent, hell and heaven, God and devil and angels, the Fall and the Cross and the Ascension, miracles and apostles and saints, were in all those regards on the intellectual and psychic level of the backward races, however scrupulous might be the accompanying moral instruction. There did not really

exist a Christian intellectual ethic—an ethic of evidenced statement and reasoned opinion—any more than there had been in certain pagan periods an effective ethic of sex. At every new step in freethought, accordingly, at every new pressure of scientific discovery or critical inquiry, the innovators were met very much as were the first native opponents of religious cannibalism in Tahiti.[1] Cannibals, it is now known, are not specially "bad" people.[2]

Intellectual chicanery in the fitting of the sacred formula to the obtruded truth was as spontaneous as it had been over the slow acceptance of Copernicanism, and as it is in our own day. Truths which stamp the sacred records as false are met by "re-interpretation" of the records, never by their critical dismissal. "The history of religion," writes Frazer[3] concerning some primitive forms, "is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice." In later stages the effort is to find a new meaning for an old text, a palliation for an old doctrine; and the later procedure exhibits no advance in mental honesty over the others.

The text of Genesis is alleged to imply "six ages" under the terms "six days";[4] the Flood is discovered to have been "partial"; the story of Joshua's arrest of sun and moon is declared to be an oriental poetic trope; the tempting serpent to be a known symbol for evil; and the use by the Lord of the language of belief in demoniacal possession is explained as a necessary accommodation to popular ignorance. To such readjustments many good men consent. And so with the dogma of inspiration. We have seen how Marsh and Thirlwall severally evaded the confession that the doctrine is a mere survival of primitive hallucination. Straightforward believers, realizing that they were being caught in a net of words, protested that the term had now no meaning left, and either reverted to fanaticism or rejected faith. Here the honest believer is more logical than the accommodater who claims a deeper insight. But bad reasoning in turn becomes as congenial to the religious mind as incredible narrative had been formerly; and religion is finally revealed as toxic no less for veracity than it had been for judgment. There has been a "debasing of the moral currency."

It is thus easy to understand in terms of causation the hostility, so readily flaming into hate, felt by the traditionary religionist for the new ways of thinking which jostle his. A man who has always associated the sensation of possessed truth with a simple citation from his "Scripture" or his formulas is as it were of another tribe than that of the man for whom truth is the conclusion patiently induced or deduced from a whole series of tested observations. To this day may be seen, in academics,

[1] See *A Short History of Morals*, pp. 68–9. [2] *Id.* p. 67.
[3] *Golden Bough*, Pt. V, vol. ii, p. 40.
[4] This formula, already current at the beginning of the century, remained so for sixty years.

something of the scornful impatience avowed by the elder Arnold for all scientific education as a mental discipline.[1] The man of *belles lettres*, rich in inculcated or spontaneous convictions, is conscious of a quasi-godlike superiority to the microscopists and chemists, physicists and physicians, who presume to think that they can throw or attain any light on the higher problems of the universe.

The same emotional repugnance is revealed by the philosophers who, clamped to their supposedly intuitive idea of an Infinite Personal Spirit, associate that incogitable theorem with all "religion," as constituting *per se* a "higher" and "deeper" and "nobler" frame of mind than is possible to any one who has come to disvalue it. They are committed to affirming an Omnipotence which cannot get its own way. Religion thus figures, among other things, as a standing inspiration to self-praise, in the teeth of all formulas representing it as founded in humility. Much has been written of the "arrogance" of men of science; and doubtless all new attainment of demonstrable truth tends to stir in the average man a temper of complacency, ill warranted by the tone of the great discoverers. But it might be overwhelmingly demonstrated that the transient arrogance of science is a slight thing in comparison with the arrogance of religious creed and the religious self-consciousness.

For the educated faithful it was expressed in Newman's picture[2] of the divine superiority of the most ignorant and lazy and untruthful Catholic peasant woman, if chaste, to the most intellectual of unbelievers, ancient or modern. To the eye of the social observer it was and is perceptible, insofar as it is distinct from malice, alike in the mass of Christian literature and in the doctrine of what passes for Christian sociology. Scientifically speaking, vainglory is the appanage of the smaller and ruder minds in a given civilization, even as it appears to be much more obtrusive in the more barbaric stages of history when compared with the later. And there can be little critical question, on retrospect, as to the intellectual calibre of the hosts of orthodoxy in comparison with that of the invaders of their realm.

It is no disparagement of the literary and spiritual gifts and graces of Newman and Keble, Schleiermacher and Chateaubriand, to say that these distinguished men had not the intellectual grasp and sanity and coherence of the pioneers of new criticism in the sciences and in history; and concerning the common run of defenders of the faith, who wrote as ill as they reasoned, the question can hardly arise. When the polemic of the really gifted champions is critically realized as for the most part an utterance of hysteria under only æsthetic control, that of the pulpit in general scarcely calls for analysis.

But if there should still be dispute on that issue, there can be none

[1] Stanley's *Life of Dr. Arnold*, ch. viii, Letter 133.
[2] *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, ed. 1875, p. 248.

on the point of the exorbitant play of sheer bad feeling on the side of the Christian faith. From the first Christian generations malice had been its specialty; the savagery of the wars of religion had been the salient feature of modern European history; and the note of hate is the prevailing mark of the literature of orthodox rejoinder to freethinking criticism. In Strauss and Baur and Vatke, as in Paulus and Hennell, it is wholly absent; in the literature of the defence it is predominant. Paley and Watson, indeed, schooled by Gibbon, had creditably raised the tone of orthodox polemic in the previous generation; but that deviation was soon rectified under the reaction.

The significant thing is that Paley and Watson were relatively unreligious; to the sense of the pietists of the next generation they were worldly, soulless, "godless" in respect of their spirit of argumentation, which was seen to be akin to that of the unbeliever. The heat of hate promptly re-emerges in the polemic of Robert Hall;[1] in the expatiation of Coleridge[2] after his reversion to the cause (albeit not the creed) of orthodoxy; in the anger of Sidney Smith against every sign of "infidelity";[3] in Newman's confession of the wrath against a "liberal" people which kept him confined to his room in Paris,[4] and the fanaticism which estranged him from his brother;[5] in Keble's furious denunciation of the politicians who were understood to contemplate some spoliation of the Church of England.[6]

Such outbreaks, from such sources, tell conclusively enough that institutional religion, massing the emotions of bodies corporate, operates simply as a form of tribalism, turning to sectarian use the most primitive social passions.[7] Such had been the causation of the Crusades, of the French Wars of Religion, of the Thirty Years War. Anglicans of the nineteenth century were now bringing to their religious problems the temper of Highland clans. The devoutest raised it to the key of the Crusades; the more commonplace kept it on the plane of faction; all alike realized their religious ideals in terms of animosity.

From the days of the New Testament we have this constant colligation of animosity with a propaganda of love. Bishop Wilson of Calcutta, recommending to the world (1829) a new edition of Wilberforce's 'Practical View of Christianity,' points[8] to "the absence of persecution in our country," declaring that Popery and Islam, and "Infidelity and Philosophy, after all their boasts," persecute; while "the revived christian doctrine proclaims its Author by its meekness, its tolerance, its benevolence, its

[1] Above, p. 12.

[2] Refs. in the author's *New Essays towards a Critical Method*, pp. 145–7, 165, 167, and above, p. 134 *n.*

[3] Above, p. 14.

[4] *Apologia*, ed. 1875, p. 33.

[5] *Id.* p. 47.

[6] Refs. in *The Dynamics of Religion*, 2nd ed. p. 215.

[7] "The sore evil, now so general, alas! only not universal, of supporting our religion just as a keen party man would support his party in Parliament" (Coleridge, note in *Anima Poetæ*, 1895, datable 1814–18). Coleridge is oblivious of his own rabidities.

[8] As cited, p. liii.

charity, its patience." Within the period under his review the "revived christian" spirit had persecuted to the extent of imprisoning or pillorying and fining dozens of freethinkers, a fact of which he must have been aware. And Wilberforce himself, in the work acclaimed by the bishop for its "christian" spirit, had thought it necessary to insert a note[1] impeaching the Scottish historian Principal Robertson, a "Moderate" leader in the Scottish Church, for his "phlegmatic account of the Reformation"; for "the ambiguity in which he leaves his readers as to his opinion of the authenticity of the Mosaic chronology"; and for "his Letters to Mr. Gibbon, lately published," which "cannot but excite emotions of regret and shame in every sincere Christian." All this with an unctuous protestation of avoidance of a "contentious" attitude to "the assailants of Christianity."

Thus there grew up a temper in which men resisted everything that savoured of novelty in thought, just because it was novelty. Minds like those of Whewell and Whately, conservative enough to the modern eye, are found revolting against the positive irrationalism which they see emerging among their pietistic academic contemporaries.

> "I cannot help suspecting," writes the young Whewell in 1823 to his friend Hugh James Rose, "that you are taking more violent remedies than are required by any contagion of a rebellious and disobedient spirit that you ever contracted. Are you not doing what our worthy friend Hare and some others do to an extent which I should not have conceived possible in men of sense? Finding that Reason cannot alone invent a satisfactory system of morals and politics, are you not quarrelling with her altogether, and adopting opinions *because* they are irrational? It is, seriously speaking, what some of you do."[2]

Whately, who in his youth (1826) published anonymously a volume of 'Letters of an Episcopalian' from which Newman, by his own declaration, learnt his theory of the Church,[3] lived to alienate Newman by his measure of rationality, and to comment, in 1839, on the "irrationalists" of that date, the product of the Tractarian movement.[4]

One nerve of the general resistance can be finally seen to be an emotional clinging to a kind of spurious memory, as distinct from "evangelical" malice. After a century in which "the Gothic" had been complacently dismissed by the prevailing prosaic taste as something tasteless and barbarous, there had been exhaled by the romanticists of France and Germany and Britain a vision of a fair past, in which Faith had somehow blessed all human life and unified all effort. All manner of minds contributed to rose-wash the Middle Ages. The Catholic historian Lingard helped by writing history honestly enough from the Catholic standpoint (1819–30). Scott, as Newman noted, "turned men's

[1] *Id.* p. 368, *note.*
[2] *The Life of William Whewell, D.D.*, by Mrs. Stair Douglas, 2nd ed. 1882, p. 95.
[3] Dean Church, *The Oxford Movement*, 1891, p. 5. [4] *Life of Whately*, 2nd ed. p. 159.

minds in the direction of the Middle Ages." Cobbett pictured a pre-Reformation England in which

> The good fat Abbots fed the poor
> With large and liberal hand;

the reviving æsthetic sense of the Beautiful saw in the Gothic a lost loveliness; and the English Tractarians, conning theology at universities which had no Chair of History, crowned all with a version of medieval history which was a masterpiece of delusion.

Froude, driven from the Lives of the Saints to a study of actual history, was stung later to confront Newman's egregious dream of a world of warring forces commuted to peace under a new Papacy with a summary of what the Papacy had wrought, after the pandemonium of the Middle Ages, in the pandemonium of the Reformation.[1] The revival of history, coming with the advance of science, went far to transmute the ignorant fairy-tale of the Tractarians into a recovery of the past which was in its way scientific. Twenty years before, Froude had been chanting 'The Philosophy of Catholicism.'[2]

But the temper of past-worship was slow to pass away. Scott, after viewing the history of Protestant fanaticism in a quite objective fashion, was still angry with people who made light of horoscopes.[3] Froude, tacking this way and that under his various repulsions, wrote of a state of unthinking orthodoxy as the only "healthy" state of things; and he, who, in the memorable avowal of his biographer, exhibited his lack of "judgment" in vindicating the Protestant use of the rack and defending the punishment of boiling alive,[4] declaimed to an audience at St. Andrews University on the cruelties of Nero as the product of "atheism."[5] Himself a product of a time of intellectual revolution, he had never reached the plane of historic science, and never ceased to confute himself.

Thus did the sentimentalism of the cultured join hands with bigotry and ignorance, the general outcome being the predominance of these in England for the first half of the century, and its survival into the second. The memoirs of the time reveal a reign of dour Puritanism or dourer ritualism among the pious. J. A. Symonds, prone enough to mystic moods, at his maturity burned the whole correspondence of five generations of his pious forbears because of "the suffocating atmosphere of a narrow sect, resembling that of a close parlour."[6] Mark Pattison, reviewing Oxford life at a period up to which Oriel College had some distinction for scholarship, declares of the tutors of Balliol in 1830 that "they were before all things clergymen, with all the prepossessions of orthodox clergymen, and incapable of employing classical antiquity as an

[1] *Short Studies*, ed. 1890, iv, 356–60. [2] *Id.* i, 188 *sq.*
[3] Introd. to *Guy Mannering*. [4] H. Paul, *Life of Froude*, pp. 103–4, 162–5.
[5] *Short Studies*, ii, 33. Cp. vol. iv, p. 354.
[6] Autobiography, in *J. A. Symonds: a Biography*, by H. F. Brown, ed. 1908, pp. 16–17.

instrument of mental culture. At most, they saw in Greek and Latin a medium for establishing the truth of Christianity."[1]

Even apart, indeed, from the positive eruption of bad feeling against all new thought, the anti-intellectual influence of revived religion in England is seen in its almost complete alienation from all work of scholarship. All observers of the Tractarian movement have remarked how it absorbed young men, withdrawing them from secular pursuits, making them enthusiasts for what they had been made to see as "higher things."[2] It meant that they did nothing to make English university life compare or compete with that of Germany in activity of real study of any kind.[3] What was done for historical science in England in that age was mostly achieved outside of the universities, notably by the free-thinking Grote and by his friend Thirlwall, who in his conscientious episcopal life seems to have found his deepest interest in his History of Greece. The inspiration of revived faith, meantime, had been sending good young men to the vertiginous study of the Lives of the Saints.[4]

Thus, while the reaction would seem to have widened the area of active religious delusion, it created in turn a measure of counter-reaction by incurring the contempt of the cooler heads within the Church, and propelling some towards the anti-clerical thinking that was being newly developed abroad. The memoirs of Mark Pattison and other academics of the period exhibit the complex which has subsisted in some form ever since. The Church of England, of which Oxford and Cambridge are the ostensible educational headquarters, has now been for centuries an aggregate of very variously minded sections, in which even the spirit of reason finds a partial footing. Thus its total resistance to the advance of freethought is not what the modern physicists call a continuum.

Much of it is probably to be understood as the chess-play of authorities more or less conscious of the absurdity of their official dogmas, but compulsorily concerned to keep from falling into chaos a revenue-drawing corporation[5] which perforce embodies (*a*) a great mass of primitive pietism, akin, as one bishop has recently avowed, to the magico-religious

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 27. [2] Dean Church, *The Oxford Movement*, 1891, pref.

[3] Cp. Pattison's *Memoirs*, ch. vi; Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, ch. iii; Hamilton, *Discussions on Philosophy*, p. 343 (art. of 1836), and App. III. It is on record that Martin F. Tupper beat Gladstone in a competitive essay on 'The Reconciliation of Matthew and John.' (Tupper, *My Life*, 1886, p. 53.)

[4] See Froude's separate essay in *Short Studies*, and his section on this topic in that on *The Oxford Counter-Reformation*.

[5] Chatham is credited, on the authority of Burke, with describing the Church of England as being Popish in her Liturgy, Calvinistic in her Articles, and Arminian in her clergy. (See Stanhope's *History of England*, ch. xlix, *sub. ann.* 1772; and Gladstone's *Church Principles*, ed. 1840, p. 452.) This was in an unreported speech, arising out of an attempt by Dissenters to get rid of the Test Act. Gladstone pronounces the saying "a shallow witticism, unworthy of so illustrious a man," but admits that it contained "a grain of truth." The phrase of Chatham has been variously manipulated by Froude and others.

beliefs of the lower civilizations; (*b*) the energetic temper of conscious Protestantism; (*c*) the no less energetic temper of zealous "Anglo-Catholic" clericalism—which has in common with the other a magico-religious belief in, and a habit of, prayer; and (*d*) a mass of comfortable routine adherents to church-going habits, who regard the Church as a social integrator, especially necessary for marriages, christenings, and burials. To find a common measure for these motley forces is the intricate function of the collective management.

There has thus arisen, for many humane men, during many generations, an elastic dilemma. Committed to the priesthood in early youth, after a theological training in which they had been fully instructed as to the heresies of the fourth century but not as to those of the eighteenth and nineteenth,[1] they found themselves in middle life met with challenges to their creed which, when they thought them out, they could not repel. There faced them, next, a choice between confessing that the creed must be rejected and a verbal or other compromise which should permit of their retaining their incomes. In the eighteenth century such priests had to consider the case against Prophecy, against Trinitarianism, against Inspiration, against Miracles. They usually decided to "carry on," doing the practical good that was open to them, and performing the Church's services as needs must. They had high precedents. Always, in the sacred books and in the creeds and dogmas, the Church had evaded the insoluble moral dilemma of Theism, as every other theistic religion had done and must do, falling back either on transparent sophistries or avowals of mystery. From the period of the establishing of the Copernican theory at the hands of Kepler, Galileo, and Newton, there had been a tacit cancelment of Biblical dicta and data which had become meaningless.

No thinking man, latterly, believed in the Ascension[2] (stolidly affirmed in the Thirty Nine Articles); and many had found refuge in the old teaching of certain Fathers that the story of the Fall was an allegory. Other doctrines might fitly be disposed of on analogous principles. And the plain fact that all this went on for economic reasons was rather a clinching consideration than a ground for any decisive misgiving about the ethic of the process. Indeed, economics apart, a priest detached from his Church, anywhere in Christendom, was then a forlorn and at times even a sinister figure.

In the nineteenth century the plot began to thicken; and, as if for that very reason, there was much alarmed closing of eyes. Geology was slowly uprearing an irresistible mass of tested induction, before which the Semitic myths of creation were finally as impotent as bows-and-arrows against artillery. Astronomy had joined hands with geology in advance;

[1] The summary proffered to the writer by a voluntarily unfrocked Anglican priest of high character and capacity.

[2] Strauss, after his first edition, had to deal with fresh German attempts to "rationalize" the miracle into misconception of appearances.

and in the train of the cancelment of the primary concept of miracle came the philosophic inference that the whole universe of things is one continuous process of causation. Still the Church could subsist by the iteration of her messages of salvation, of consolation, of Providence, and the concrete ministration of ancient rites which for the multitude was the one thing needful. The Revolution and the reaction had tightened the attachment to that routine ; and new recruits to the priesthood had the sense of attacking rather than defending.

But still the insupportable advance of reason pressed on the intrenchments. The ostensible centre of the practical creed, the doctrine of Redemption by sacrifice, was being assailed by the ripening moral sense even of theologians as a negation of morals, as anti-theistic, as a concept of savagery. Paine had powerfully put the case for all before the academics and the philosophers had begun to think of it. The case against miracles was enforced at once by the simple historic argument of Hume, and by the enveloping argument from the concept of universal causation, before which the orthodox defence figured as the merest special pleading. Further, the documents were crumbling. The Sacred Books were being newly disintegrated by dispassionate criticism, carried on by professed theologians. For the minds which could see these things, within the Church, the problem became more and more momentous and menacing.

If they were to remain within the pale they must either dissemble absolutely or endeavour to find a *via media*, to shorten the line of the defence, to moderate the dogmatic extravagance of their unthinking comrades and adherents, to present new statements of the meaning of the faith, to retain the goodwill of the more intelligent laity without exasperating the more fanatical laity and clerisy, to use the machinery of church and creed for progress ; above all, to substitute persuasion for persecution. To condemn such men for "insincerity" is seen on retrospect to be idle. They were for the most part sincere half-believers, concerned to help society no less than to retain their incomes and their influence. Some complete unbelievers there probably were, as in all ages, among the non-combatants ; but these appear to occur rather more frequently, in all periods, in the Church of No-Compromise, papal Rome.[1]

Inevitably, however, the liberalizing spirits incurred two penalties—odium from the fanatics of their own side, and that impairment of the thinking faculty which comes of applying to the problems of belief the tactics befitting the problems of action. The political reformer must compromise, because he is dealing with conflicting wills. The religious reformer who feels he has to treat beliefs as volitions has *ipso facto* ceased to be a true or helpful thinker. The moderating theologian loses on that

[1] See Houtin, *The Life of a Priest*, Eng. trans., 1927, pp. 143, 187, 246, for recent cases in the Church of Rome. Cp. pp. 205–7 as to politicians.

side whatever intellectual strength he may have gathered from the process of doubt and revision which had led him to a recognition of his dilemmas. Thus he remains, as it were, a pathological case. In the spectacle, still not uncommon, of a gifted and cultured young priest finding verbal coverings for his newly felt nudities of belief, there is at once a touch of tragedy that forbids derision and a touch of comedy that relieves sombre reflection.

Meanwhile, the spectacle presented to critical eyes by the Christian Church in England as elsewhere, in the middle of the nineteenth century, was that of a great sacerdotal combination—in which the majority must be supposed substantially honest—to demand the assent of all men to the following table of beliefs, the "message" of Christianity as built up in the decadence of ancient civilization and stabilized in the ensuing period of barbarism :—

1. The creation of the universe out of nothing in six days, as diversely related in Genesis.

2. The creation, temptation, and "fall" of Adam and Eve, and through them the fall of the human race, which accordingly had never risen.

3. The universal deluge, destroying all mankind save one family, and all animals save those in the Ark.

4. The divine inspiration—plenary or otherwise—of the entire mass of documents constituting the Bible.

5. The authorship of the entire Pentateuch by Moses, whose death is therein recorded, he having composed the five books in succession under divine inspiration.

6. The divine massacre-mission of Joshua.

7. The historic and inspired truth of the book of Judges, exhibiting a social and political state wholly incompatible with the narrative of the Pentateuch.

8. The authorship of the Book of Psalms by David, and of Proverbs, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes by Solomon.

9. The historicity not only of the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, but of the stories of Jonah, of Ruth, Esther and Job—only the more scholarly doubting.

10. The historical truth of the tales of the Annunciation, the Magi, the herald angels, and the birth at Bethlehem.

11. The supernatural birth of Jesus, born of a Virgin Mother.

12. The tales in Luke concerning the birth of John the Baptist.

13. The historicity of all the New Testament miracles.

14. The Incarnation of Almighty God in Jesus, he being the Son of God from all eternity.

15. The potential salvation of all mankind, through the shedding of the blood of the Son of God on the cross, from the damnation incurred by mankind at the Fall through the action of Adam and Eve ; the "sacrifice" of one member of the Trinity being required to placate the others, or the Father in particular.

16. The persisting damnation of all who did not believe the narrative, non-belief being deadly sin, and ignorance of the propagation of the gospel being only a doubtful plea.

17. The provision of a physical machinery of everlasting hell-fire for all unsaved sinners, classified generally either as unbelievers or as Christians who omitted to maintain the state of saving faith. (Only a minority from the sixteenth century onwards took a "spiritual" view of the dogma.)

18. The Resurrection of Christ "from the dead." (His Ascension, in "bones and flesh," is affirmed in the Thirty Nine Articles. How far believed at any period since the age of Kepler is matter of speculation.)

19. The bodily resurrection of all human beings at the Judgment Day—the position of Luther as against the "pagan" theory of the immortality of the soul.

20. The inspired truth alike of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, irrespective of all contradictions.

21. The inspired truth of the book of Revelation.

22. The existence of the Godhood in a state of Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all being "persons," but all together constituting one.

23. The necessity of baptism to salvation.[1]

24. The operation of some divine virtue in the sacrament of communion, the nature of the process being left to individual opinion.

25. The general efficacy of prayer for improved weather and health conditions—no guarantee of efficacy being offered.

26. The sinfulness of neglect of "divine ordinances," and of Sabbath-breaking in particular.

27. The impossibility (in England) of legal marriage save by sacerdotal ministry.

28. The immense importance to mankind of the maintenance of these beliefs, civilization having been preserved by their means, and depending on their maintenance.

Of almost equal authority with the positive doctrines propounded by the Churches was the conviction of the essentially evil character of all doubt, and in particular of all open assailants of the Christian creed and the Sacred Books. Believers in the Christian doctrines were the "sheep" of the divine allegory: doubters and deniers were the "goats," certain to be damned in the next world, and fitly to be ostracized and impoverished —imprisonment having become impracticable—in this.

Educated Christians of the twentieth century as a rule make no attempt to realize the intellectual conditions set up by the solemn inculcation, as "divine truth," of that mass of insane beliefs, as to which they themselves now stand in an attitude, in general, of unbelief, the result of the entire cultural process of criticism and research which has discredited them for the instructed. And exponents of Christian history still maintain the claim that the imposition of that aggregate of beliefs in the past had been highly if not wholly conducive alike to moral, intellectual, and social progress. It is for the truth-seeking historian to keep the historic facts in view, and to note, as regards the varying evolution, the process by which moral and critical sanity of opinion was to some extent gradually substituted for the other state, in the face of the impassioned resistance of the religious forces.

It would be a serious oversight, however, to fail to note the undesigned service done to freethought at certain points by some defenders of the faith. When, for instance, deists employed the design argument against

[1] The specially hideous doctrine of the damnation of unbaptised infants was never in modern times universally held, but certainly survived into the nineteenth century.

atheists, vigilant defenders of revelation (as against deism) were careful to point out that in reality the argument could not prove a *single* designer, since it could obviously yield the inference of a multiplicity of designers —a point duly developed by the "common enemy" in connection with their exposition of the destructiveness of Nature. Equally educative was the orthodox philosophic argument as to the transcendency of Deity, not only as against the primitive anthropomorphism of the Scriptures, but against the more sophisticated anthropomorphism which ascribed "design" to Omnipotence from the analogy of the works of man—and this, commonly, in an argument which figured a traveller finding a watch in a wilderness—i.e., in a divinely created environment which, in the terms of the argument, exhibited *no* design.

More fortuitous, but no less real, was the service rendered by the reforming theologians who sought to substitute for the revolting doctrine of Atonement and Salvation by blood sacrifice a thesis which represented the Saviour as dying to enforce attention to his moral teaching. The change of view was visibly promoted by the freethinking attack ; but the assimilation of that, despite the element of mystification, was in terms of a superior moral sense on the part of the reformers, and their doctrine drew upon older theological doctrine, similarly inspired.

It is not generally noted that these "purifications" of Christian doctrine in the nineteenth century arose directly from the propaganda of the German "rationalists" of the anti-supernatural school, who in turn proceeded on a line of debate going back through Spinoza to Socinus. Similarly it is to be noted that the present-day Neo-Unitarian position of a Historical Jesus who gave the world a beautiful religion is but an adoption of the rationalist view of the school of Paulus and Röhr. (Cp. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, § 147.) And there are other filiations.

In the hands of Maurice the doctrine of sacrifice became one of example to the end of subjective regeneration of the sinner. This view, which was developed by John the Scot—perhaps from hints in Origen[1]—and again by Bernardino Ochino,[2] is specially associated with the teaching of Coleridge ; but it was quite independently held in England before him by the Anglican Dr. Parr (1747–1825), who appears to have been heterodox upon most points in the orthodox creed,[3] and who, like Servetus and Coleridge and Hegel, held by a modal as against a "personal" Trinity. The advance in ethical sensitiveness which had latterly marked English thought, and which may perhaps be traced in equal degrees to the influence of Shelley and to that of Bentham, counted for much in this shifting of Christian

[1] Baur, *Die christliche Lehre der Versöhnung*, 1838, pp. 54–63, 124–31.
[2] Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino*, Eng. tr. pp. 248–87.
[3] Field's *Memoirs of Parr*, 1828, ii, 363, 374–9

ground. The doctrine of salvation by faith was by many felt to be morally indefensible. Such Unitarian accommodations presumably reconciled to Christianity and the Church many who would otherwise have abandoned them; and the only orthodox rebuttal seems to have been the old and dangerous resort to the Butlerian argument, to the effect that the God of Nature shows no such benign fatherliness as the anti-sacrificial school ascribe to him.[1] This could only serve to emphasize the moral bankruptcy of Butler's philosophy, to which Mansel, in an astonishing passage of his Bampton Lectures,[2] had shown himself incredibly blind.

The conflict, in any case, served to make clear the unethical character of evangelicalism—revealed alike in the doctrines of death-bed repentance and of foreordained election. When missionaries proclaimed the comfort felt by aged baptised cannibals in the Christian doctrine of forgiveness for sin there must have been critical reactions.

As always, too, the strifes of believers over their unmanageable dogmas made for a rejection of dogma in general. When theists proclaimed their belief in immortality, revelationists were quick to insist that only revelation could give secure foothold for the tenet, despite the fact that so many Jews had held it, without revelation, before Christ. Thereupon came the rejoinder that the revealed doctrine, as was proclaimed by Luther, was one of bodily resurrection at the Day of Judgment, and that the belief in the immortality of the soul was, as Luther insisted, pagan. On the reluctant dismissal, under scientific pressure, of the notion of bodily resurrection, the residual content of revelation was seen to be small.

Less, probably, can be said for religious collaboration in the dismissal of the relatively unimportant shibboleth of the Trinity, which had always a merely verbal rather than an emotional currency. The old device of a "modal" presentment of the "persons" was generally recognizable as scholastic sleight-of-hand, though it was characteristically caught at by Coleridge. The silent dissolution of such a supererogatory dogma was mainly effected by the scholarly demonstration of its pagan origin. Yet the dogma of the Sonship of Jesus withholds the churches from the confession; and they are thus to this day, in effect, polytheistic. On the other hand, credit must be given to a number of clerical publicists, not easily to be enumerated, for opposition to the vulgar belief in miracles. This, as we have seen, originated with the polemic of the English and French deists, assimilated by the earlier German theological rationalists; but fresh philosophical thinking, perhaps also inspired from Germany,

[1] See Pearson's *Infidelity, its Aspects, Causes, and Agencies*, 1853, p. 215 *sq.* The position of Maurice and Parr (associated with other and later names) is there treated as one of the prevailing forms of "infidelity," and called spiritualism. In Germany the orthodox made the same dangerous answer to the theistic criticism. See the *Memoirs of F. Perthes*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. ii, 242–3. [2] Ed. cited, pp. 158–9.

had been at work among the more enlightened priests who recognized the poverty of the orthodox creed on this side. The predominance of unreason in the Church, indeed, is at no point more obvious than in the insistence on the creed of miracle at the present day by bishops who in the pulpit avow the truth of Darwinism.

More rational views were held in the middle of the nineteenth century by some men of the school of Coleridge, who had resisted[1] the Paleyan doctrine that miracles were an essential part of the Christian scheme. There was thus an element of freethinking influence in the sermons of F. W. Robertson "of Brighton" (1816–53), who was of that school, and who caught at Lessing's 'Education of the Human Race' (which he translated) as a mode of escape from the theology of original sin and sacrificial atonement. His own theology remained indeed a case of "reason entering into a weak and futile compromise with barbaric superstition"[2] as to Deity and original sin. But his many admirers were being led by him out of orthodoxy into a more progressive way of thought; and he suffered much theological odium in consequence. A preacher who avowed that Christianity had made its first headway in virtue of the belief in the speedy end of the world, and that the design argument, as an instrument "for proving God's existence, or demonstrating to one well-informed infidel the falsity of his opinion, ever has been and ever must be powerless,"[3] must have made about as many enemies as friends in the Church.

§ 2. *Transition Types in England: Blanco White, Whately, Dr. Arnold, Newman*

We have already noticed, in following the general movement and the renascence, what may be classed as transitional types of mind in France and Germany. Indeed, as historical criticism latterly recognizes, all ages are really ages of transition, and individual men merely fulfil the process in varying degrees. The greater thinkers and pioneers are but the higher lights in the general transformation; and often if not always they are conspicuously progressive only in certain respects. Newton remains an Arian, bogged in the interpretation of prophecy. Voltaire and Paine remain à priori deists, and Paine preaches the future life after Voltaire had on that score reached agnosticism. In Biblical criticism the first "rationalists" were uncritical beyond the point of eliminating the supernatural; and the first great historical critics, outgoing these, still clung to untested assumptions. Less gifted and less daring men play the same part in their smaller way.

One of the most interesting and attractive of the figures who embody in their single mental lives more or less of the process of reconstruction

[1] *Aids to Reflection*, cxxii, 1. [2] Benn, ii, 76.
[3] *Life and Letters*, by Stopford Brooke, i, 344.

is Joseph Blanco White[1] (1775–1841), who, trained for the priesthood in Spain, painfully delivered himself from Catholic orthodoxy and came to England in 1810. As described by White, the Spanish Catholic discipline exhibits at its very worst the religious resistance to every step of free-thought in respect of the sheer paralysis inflicted on all the faculties of judgment. It required a congenital force of understanding to throw off, as he did, the priestly domination while retaining a strong emotional religious basis.

In England he was welcomed as a scholarly and intelligent recruit to the Protestant and the anti-Napoleonic cause ; and after editing for four years a Spanish monthly journal he received an English pension of £250, was for a year tutor to Lord Holland's son, and was admitted to Anglican orders and to membership of Oriel College. Thereafter he became tutor in the family of Archbishop Whately at Dublin, remaining there on an intimate footing till, in that atmosphere of orthodoxy tempered by reason, he found himself driven to the Unitarian view of the Christian creed, and fled (1835) to Liverpool. In the remaining years of his life there, spent in physical and mental suffering, he reached an attitude in advance of orthodox Unitarianism, having outgone belief in miracles and Biblical inspiration, and dying, like Hennell, a simple theist.

Whately showed a quite exceptional goodness of heart in his personal attitude to White on his relapse, and the family visited him at every opportunity. Himself the victim of much obloquy at the hands of his fellow churchmen in England and Ireland, Whately had developed a manly aversion from all persecution[2]—a result rather of his training on the rational side of life than of his religious feeling, though that was considerable.

It is little to the credit of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association that in 1877, after two editions of the Life of Whately had appeared and been discussed, it reprinted without retractation (with a reprint of White's 'Observations on Heresy and Orthodoxy') the notice of 1841 in which J. H. Thom stated of White that "from an Archbishop's palace he went forth, a lonely man, to contented obscurity and neglect" (vol. cited, pp. xxii–iii). In the Life of Whately there had actually appeared the indignant letter (2nd ed. pp. 194–6) in which he commented on the original statement. Whatever sense of ostracism the suffering spirit of White endured, he met not a shadow of personal alienation from the Archbishop or his family ; and Whately even sends to him friendly greetings from the Dublin clergy.

The weak point in Whately's case is his confident assertion that White's mind had been "unhinged." Greatly perturbed it doubtless

[1] The "White" is but the added English equivalent of the Spanish "Blanco." White was of Irish descent.

[2] Above, p. 17.

was, White being at all times temperamentally high-strung; but the argumentation of his writings is really much more coherent than that of Whately on cognate matters. Indeed White's ultimate denial of miracles would soon have estranged him from Unitarians in general; for they, like Whately, remained anti-scientific on this essential issue when all the rational elements in German thought had taken the scientific side. At the beginning of the century we find Paley convinced, and convincing his congeners, that miracles had been absolutely essential to the introduction of Christianity, and must therefore have happened. At the middle of the century we find Whately, editing Paley, convinced to the same effect. The fact is the measure of his mental depth as distinguished from his range.

On the other hand the Archbishop might well hold, with Malthus, that an honest interpretation of the gospels as they stand excludes the Unitarian view; but on the main issue of the incredibility of the supernatural he did no consistent thinking. His proposition in the 'Logic' that *Persona* means not a person but a character is a broad clue to his doubts on the dogma of the Trinity; and it naturally elicited the charge that he was a Sabellian;[1] an issue which he was careful not to develop. But beyond that point he plays the part of a good ecclesiastic who sees sufficient documentary ground for a balance of orthodoxy, and is careful not to go too deep into the argument. It was part of the intellectual tragedy created by religion that every dogma, however factitious, however irrelevant even to normal religious feeling, stood by the same tenure of use and wont, and that on all alike men must be acquiescent or be ostracized.

It is interesting to note Whately's contact with the rationalistic spirit of Baden Powell, the Savilian Professor of Geometry at Oxford, who, trained for the church, was more effectively drawn to science, and, though never shaken in his doctrinal theism, left the ministry after two years, in his twenties, to devote himself to his proper calling. One of his first rationalizing treatises was 'Tradition Unveiled,' and on this, before its publication, Whately writes (1839) with his usual frank friendliness when a colleague points out that, after all, the whole Christian creed is a matter of accepting tradition. Whately's criticism amounts to an avowal that he sees no infallible basis anywhere, and is content to feel fallible.[2] At the same time he called the "traditionals" at Oxford "the Children of the Mist."

They might have retorted that he cultivated a considerable fog of his own. To Powell he writes: "If you admit, e.g., Paul's epistles to be genuine and not the work of a fool, a madman, or an impostor, *he must have been inspired, because he says so.*" The logician here assumes (*a*) that the state of supernatural inspiration is something quite well known,

[1] *Life*, as cited, p. 61.

[2] *Id.* pp. 145-8.

recognizable, and testable, for both claimant and spectator; and (*b*) that self-deception or error of self-diagnosis is impossible to one who is not demonstrably a fool, a madman, or a deliberate liar. Paley had been more circumspect—perhaps remembering that Gallio is in effect represented as thinking Paul a fool.

Whately is thus seen to be striving, in mental fetters, to find a presentable philosophic aspect for a creed which he knew to be even more widely doubted than assailed; and there is a historic interest in one of his early writings[1] which seeks to frame a stronger case than Paley's :—

> There is a notion more commonly entertained than acknowledged, that the Gospel is a mere authoritative republication of natural religion; that consequently it is chiefly, if not solely, to those of unphilosophical and vulgar minds, incapable of perceiving the internal evidence of this natural religion and the intrinsic beauty of virtue, that such a revelation is important or needful—and that, to the more intelligent and refined, it matters little whether or not they inquire minutely into the particulars of that religion—whether they believe, or disbelieve, or doubt, its reality—or whether they even propose to themselves the question. With a view to counteract this (as it may be called) heresy of indifference—in my view, the most deadly of all errors, not excepting Atheism—I pointed out [in former Essays] and dwelt on several *peculiarities* of the Christian religion.....

This argument, he claims, unbelievers have never attempted to meet; and "it must afford," he thinks, "at the very least, a very strong presumption that the religion is really from God." It is, in point of fact, not merely an argument from ignorance, like that of Young and Cowper,[2] but one already being undermined not only by those who, like Thirlwall and Hennell and Newman, recognized the universality of what was sound in Christian ethic, but by those who were on the way to the positions of Milman. And despite all his polemic—which is reported to have converted at least two "hardened infidels," one of whom became a missionary,[3] though it failed to satisfy Blanco White—Whately figured for many churchmen in his day as a dangerous person. We have Dr. Thomas Arnold's[4] grieving testimony :—

> I am sure that, in point of real essential holiness, so far as man can judge, there does not live a truer Christian than Whately; and it does grieve me most deeply to hear people speak of him as a dangerous and latitudinarian character because in him the intellectual part of his nature keeps pace with the spiritual.[5]

The latter specification could not well be applied to Dr. Arnold himself, though he in turn was declared by the energumens of the Oxford

[1] Introduction to *Essays on some of the difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul*, 3rd ed. 1833, pp. xxvi–xxvii.
[2] Cowper's Letter of July 12, 1765.
[3] *Life*, p. 126.
[4] *Id.* p. 60; *Life of Arnold*, ed. 1890, p. 178.
[5] The picture drawn of Whately by Judge O'Connor Morris (*Memories and Thoughts of a Life*, 1895, pp. 191–2) suggests that his exterior rather than his inner character set up the antagonism felt for him.

Movement to be "not a Christian."[1] He is a striking case of the scholarly man of strong personality and understanding, spontaneously conscious of incredibilities in his creed, but, being placed in a position of clerical status and responsibility, emotionally determined to "keep his doubts down." The sane thinker in him, warmly liberal on the side of politics, delighted in Aristotle and Thucydides: the priest and schoolmaster is nonetheless desperately convinced of the necessity of a zealous religious routine to keep the mind pious. In so many words he avows (1836): "The tendency to Atheism, I imagine, exists in every study followed up vigorously, without a foundation of faith, and that foundation carefully strengthened and built upon."[2]

Faith, then, is to be a state of self-hypnotism. "There *are* difficulties," he writes to a troubled lady, "in the way of all religion—such, for instance, as the existence of evil—which can never be fairly solved by human powers."[3] But "If I were talking with an Atheist, I should lay a great deal of stress on *faith* as a necessary condition of our nature, and as a gift of God to be earnestly sought for in the way in which God has appointed, that is, by striving to *do his will.*" It is the principle of Pascal's advice to the doubter to pray and go to mass: "*Cela vous abêtira*: that will stupefy you,"[4] though Arnold stolidly asserts that "faith does no violence to our understanding."

On questions of Biblical criticism he remained for the most part prudently inert,[5] that being not "the way which God has appointed"; and thus, while repugned against for his Liberalism by minds of the contrary cast, he remained a pillar of orthodoxy in respect of his hostility to all non-religious moral effort and influence on the younger generation who passed through his hands at Rugby. But in the next age that influence was to be incongruously associated with the signally latitudinarian liberalism in theology of his pupil and biographer, Dean Stanley, and with the name and fame of his own son, "David the son of Goliath,"[6] the blandest iconoclast of his day. The stars in their courses were working against the faith of the accommodaters, though the broad economic foundation of the churches was to preserve the fabric of traditional religion for many a day.

From a study of such action and reaction there emerges the perception of a frequent contribution of forward impulse by men bent on resisting such a movement. It is their resort to argument that generates the thought process which countervails them. Nowhere is this more notice-

[1] Herbert Paul, *Life of Froude*, 1905, p. 15. Cp. Newman, *Apologia*, p. 34.
[2] *Life of Dr. Thomas Arnold*, by Dean Stanley, 1-vol. ed. 1890, p. 288.
[3] *Id.* p. 179.
[4] Arnold, in the letter to Lady Egerton just cited, recommends Pascal's *Pensées* to his correspondent.
[5] Though in 1835 he wanted a Theological Review which should "make some beginning of Biblical Criticism, which, so far as relates to the Old Testament, is in England almost non-existent."
[6] Phrase cited by Swinburne.

able than in the case of a gifted writer who, by reasoning, sought anew to enforce the doctrine that reason must yield to faith. John Henry Newman did a service to rationalism in his own despite. He was unique in his combination of a real reasoning faculty (apart from his inculcated presuppositions) with a "complex" of feudal pietism which dictated that reason must not rule. In that consists what has been called his "mystery." For the sacrosanct apparatus of the historic Church, ritual and pageant and vestment and incense, "bell, book, and candle," he had the same passionate craving as for "the great white throne": and it operated in him somewhat as does in normal men the instinct of sex. A rare gift of style and a strong will,[1] strenuously asserted until he passed to peace in the Church of Rome, served him to dominate a multitude of undergraduates and others, to whom he hardily avowed that the argument of Hume against miracles was valid, but that argument must yield to faith.[2]

In detail, Newman brought home to the thoughtful the fact that the Bible, a mere collection of ancient books, could not give a valid basis for belief, could not contend against "the wild, living intellect of man,"[3] could not establish a reasoned faith in God. He offered as substitute the authority of "the Church," which took all responsibility on its shoulders. But Blanco White had just told how *he* left that Church because *its* authority confessedly rested on the very Bible of which it claimed to give the authoritative interpretation. The argument was an argument in a circle. Newman had given men a choice between Papalism and Atheism, effecting a *reductio ad atheismum*. The atheists at once rejoined that he had made for himself a *reductio ad imbecillitatem*. The theists, for their part, replied that they found their God where the Bible-makers had found theirs. Newman hypnotized the hypnotizable; the others went about their business all the same.

Considered as a section of social history, the Tractarian Movement was anything but a lifting either of minds or of tempers. In its outset it was directed rather against the political Erastianism and æsthetic apathy of the Whig type of Christian than against German or other criticism, of which Newman knew little. As he put it later, "The vital question was, how were we to keep the Church from being liberalized?"[4] And the method was largely that of malediction. Against the attitude of those moderate Anglicans who were disposed to disestablish the Church in Ireland and to modernize the liturgy somewhat, the language of the 'Tracts for the Times' is as authoritarian and anti-rationalistic as that of Catholics denouncing freethought. Such expressions as "the filth of

[1] "His head was large, his face remarkably like that of Julius Cæsar." Of a volume of Wellington's despatches he said: "It makes one burn to have been a soldier." Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, iv, ed. 1890, 273, 279. (Letters on "The Oxford Counter-Reformation," *Good Words*, 1881.) [2] *Id.* pp. 287–92.
[3] *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, p. 245. Cp. pp. 243–4, 261. [4] *Id.* pp. 30, 104.

heretical novelty"[1] are meant to apply to anything in the nature of innovation; the causes at stake are ritual and precedent, the apostolic succession and the status of the priest, not the truth of revelation or the credibility of the scriptures. The third Tract appeals to the clergy to "resist the alteration of even one jot or tittle" of the liturgy; and concerning the burial service the line of argument is: "Do you pretend you can discriminate the wheat from the tares? Of course not." All attempts even to modify the ritual are an "abuse of reason"; and the true believer is adjured to stand fast in the ancient ways.[2] At a pinch he is to "consider what *Reason* says: which surely, as well as Scripture, was given us for *religious* ends";[3] but the only "reason" thus recognized is one which accepts the whole apparatus of revelation.

The sequel was anything but a triumph either for the prophet or his cause, save insofar as his lead developed in the Church of England a tumultuous movement of ritualism, which gathered-in the least thoughtful minds. The actual "reversions to Rome" which followed represented no truly intellectual movement.[4] And the Anglican heresiarch, giving his fealty to the Church which seemed to realize his ideal, found himself therein flouted and denounced for his indestructible impulse to the "private judgment" which, while exercising it, he would have denied to others.[5]

This, the very faculty which had given him his distinction and his influence, moved him to recommend, in a magazine article, that there should be some consultation of the laity in the matter of faith; whereupon his English Catholic bishop delated him at Rome for heresy; his former friend Ward accused him of "worldliness" and of "disloyalty to the Vicar of Christ," and a prince of the Church pronounced him "the most dangerous man in England." Neither did his ostensible rival, Manning, admit him to be a "true Catholic."[6]

It was not Catholicism that gained, as regards the intellectual world, from that spectacle of pathetic inconsistency on the one side and acrid sacerdotalism on the other. To speak as Froude does of an "intellectual recovery of Romanism"[7] is, as he himself shows, merely to misuse terms. There was not and could not be any such revival at all; and Catholics, the avowed enemies of intellectualism, should be the last to pretend it. There was a revival that was expressly anti-intellectual, a stampede of consciously lost sheep. But the dialectic of Newman in

[1] *Tracts for the Times*, vol. ii, ed. 1839; *Records of the Church*, No. xxiv.
[2] *Tracts for the Times*, No. 3. [3] *Id.* No. 32.
[4] Compare Froude, *Short Studies*, iii, 150, 166; iv, 336. Gladstone (*Gleanings*, 1879, iii, 219) notes "an enormous augmentation in the *arguing* and *teaching* capacity of the Anglo-Roman body." That means merely a multiplication of propaganda.
[5] "Newman, though he forbids private judgment to others, seems throughout to retain the right of it for his own guidance.....Yet the bishops were expected to submit on the spot, without objection or hesitation, to the dictation of a single person." Froude, *Short Studies*, iv, 309.
[6] Purcell's Life of Manning, ii, 317-18, 323-4. [7] *Short Studies*, iv, 271.

his day of influence, with its self-stultifying claim to judge personally that there should be no personal use of judgment, and its unthinking restatement of the old paralogism of an Omnipotent God forever defeated by his creatures, must have turned many of the better minds on another path; and the later vision of his humiliation, balanced by a cardinal's hat, moved compassion without winning adherents. The spiritual spectacle of Spain has never allured England. Newman's "influence" in the end was mainly a matter of his exceptional literary charm; and even that, for the critical, was balanced by the perception that his loveliest and best-beloved hymn, like his doctrinal message, is a self-contradiction.

§ 3. *The Reaction in Germany*

It has long been the habit of German scholars to dwell on the academic freedom which already in the latter part of the eighteenth century began to distinguish their country, and to represent it as a complete contrast to the conditions in England. In the sixth decade of the nineteenth century we have Alexander von Humboldt designating England "the priest-ridden Kingdom of the leopards"; and the contrast between the country with a deep-rooted and dominant State Church and the one lately fitted with a shallowly rooted one was certainly piquant. But it was to be discovered that in Prussia, at least, theological and regal influence, between them, could be repressive enough.

We have noted the intensity of the animus aroused against Strauss by the directness and destructiveness of his method, despite the perfect amenity of his tone. It is on record that Berlin authorities discussed with Neander the propriety of suppressing the *Leben Jesu*.[1] This temper went so far that ere long any suspicion of connection with Strauss served to bar the professorate for young theologians.[2] Reaction did not end there. In the English *Times* of August 8, 1842, it is told that the Senate of the Berlin University had been reprimanded by the Prussian Minister of Religious Affairs and Education for refusing to sanction a society among the Berlin students of divinity for *supporting* the historical view of Christianity against the attacks of the modern school of critics. The Senate explained that if they sanctioned such a society they could not refuse to sanction a society of the contrary tendency; but the Minister intimated that there must never be any hesitation on that score. The incident was understood to point to the new effect of Strauss's *Glaubenslehre* (1840–1), which was not impotent, though publicly ignored.

Reaction did not stop there, being engineered with the full power of the Prussian State in particular. The pious Frederick William IV, already furious against Swiss Radicalism in 1847, was moved by the revolutionary outbreaks of 1848 to a fierce repression of everything

[1] Dr. Beard, in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*, 1845, pp. 16–17.
[2] Zeller, p. 56.

liberal in theological teaching. "This dismal period of Prussian history was the bloom-period of the Hengsterbergian theology"[1]—the school of rabid orthodoxy, which Strauss, however, preferred to the shuffling tribe of compromisers. In 1854, Eduard Zeller, bringing out in book form his work on 'The Acts of the Apostles' (originally produced in the *Tübingen Theological Journal*, 1848–51), writes that "The exertions of our ecclesiastics, assisted by political reaction, have been so effectual that the majority of our theologians not only look with suspicion or indifference on this or that scientific opinion, but regard scientific knowledge in general with the same feelings"; and he leaves it an open question "whether time will bring a change, or whether German Protestantism will stagnate in the Byzantine conditions towards which it is now hastening with all sail on."[2] For his own part, Zeller abandoned the field of theology for that of philosophy, producing a massive history of Greek philosophy, and a slight one of German philosophy since Leibniz.

Another expert of Baur's school, Albrecht Schwegler, author of works on Montanism, the Post-Apostolic Age, and other problems of early Christian history, and of a *Handbook of the History of Philosophy* which for half a century had an immense circulation, was similarly driven out of theological research by the virulence of the reaction,[3] and turned to the task of Roman history, in which he distinguished himself as he did in every other he essayed. The brains were being expelled from the chairs of theology. And though the systematic reaction of the reign of Frederick William IV may be said to have ended with him, there has always been in the German theological world the same kind of dead weight against radical criticism, the same unreasoning traditionist sentiment, as in England, with the same habit of proffering emotional declamation where reason calls for argument. It belongs to the nature of the case that an army of pastors should be intent on saving the historic credit of their creed and function, the more stubbornly because it is annoyingly assailed.

While the hot fit of persecution lasted there was little to choose between German and English methods. The pamphlet in which Edgar Bauer defended his brother Bruno against his opponents (1842) was seized by the police; and in the following year, for publishing 'The Strife of Criticism with Church and State,' the same writer was sentenced to four years' imprisonment. In private life, persecution was carried on in the usual ways; and the virulence of the theological resistance recalled the palmy days of Lutheran polemics. In the sense that the mass of orthodoxy held its ground for the time being, the rationalistic attack failed. Naturally the most advanced and uncompromisingly scientific positions were least discussed, the stress of dispute going on around the

[1] Hausrath, *David Friedrich Strauss und die Theologie seiner Zeit*, 1878, ii, 233–4.
[2] Pref. to work cited, Eng. tr. 1875, i, 86, 89. [3] Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 391.

criticism which modified without annihilating the main elements in the current creed, or that which did the work of annihilation on a popular level of thought.

Thus there subsisted, after the death of Schleiermacher, forces of religious reaction which only partially adhered to his teaching, but which, like that, appealed so far to the spirit of reason as to retain the support of many who had abandoned Lutheran orthodoxy. Divines of Schleiermacher's school proceeded to revert to elements of dogma which he had practically discarded. Obeying the reaction after 1848, they tended of themselves to become more orthodox; but still more to appeal to "the real or supposed wants of the churches."[1] In short, if Christian Churches were to be held together they must be fed with as much religion and as little rationalism as possible, though the religious rationalism of Germany was still something from which English orthodoxy recoiled.

Thus Karl Ullmann (1796–1865), whose book on 'The Sinlessness of Jesus'[2] found belated acceptance as an "evidential" work in an English translation, C. I. Nitzsch, Julius Müller, and other men influential in their day, sought "to save as much as possible of the traditional matter of the ecclesiastical dogmas, while softening down their offensive features by forms of expression borrowed from Schleiermacher's theology."[3] Nitzsch, one of the founders of a new Christian Review for the Union of Lutheran and Reformed Churches[4] (1850), seeking to conciliate at once the liberals and the royalists who disliked the union of the churches, reinstated the doctrines of miracles and prophecy, put in a "moderate" form which only emphasized the incoherence of the position,[5] yet sufficed to form a rallying ground for religious minds which craved a reconciliation of science and faith; and his 'System of Practical Theology' (1847–67) was pronounced "an enduring monument" twenty years after his death.[6]

German theologians, in fact, were making a stand for a modified orthodoxy with rather more success, for a time, than has attended the laggard efforts of English ecclesiastics in a later period. They retained, that is to say, the adherence of a considerable body of men of culture, as did Baron Bunsen (1791–1860), liturgist, Egyptologist, and "Christian philosopher," the admired friend of Dr. Arnold, albeit something of a heretic, seeing good Christians in Schleiermacher, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, and showing sympathy, later, with Renan. Like the Arnolds, Bunsen insisted on the superior historicity of the fourth gospel, and presumably helped to preserve that illusion. When an English Unitarian

[1] Pfleiderer, *The Development of Theology in Germany Since Kant*, 1893, p. 122.
[2] Published in book form in 1830. Eng. trans., *The Sinlessness of Jesus: An Evidence for Christianity*, 1858. Ullmann's *Gregory of Nazianzum* was also translated (1851), as was Neander's *Life of St. Bernard* (1843). [3] Pfleiderer, p. 123.
[4] *Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben.*
[5] Pfleiderer, p. 124. [6] Lichtenberger, p. 194.

sought to countervail Strauss in England (1845) it was mainly on German confutations that he relied to form his volume.

Particularly characteristic of German theology on the theoretic if not on the temperamental side is the manifold performance of Richard Rothe (1799–1867), who may conceivably have been the inspirer of Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, since he embodies its thesis in his doctrine of the Church as destined to dissolve itself in the State when the State becomes good enough.[1] With this premature liberalism he combined, like Nitzsch, a belief in miracles, regarding Christ as one, very much in the manner of "Shepherd" Smith in the previous decade in England. "At a time when everybody was a rationalist, Rothe preserved his faith in the supernatural."[2] Nevertheless, in the posthumous 'Still Hours,' which, like some of his sermons, was translated into English (1877) for the orthodox, he confesses that personality is not properly ascribable to Deity; though of course he goes on with substitute formulas.

A few of those neological defenders of the faith in Germany in the middle period wielded their influence more or less largely in virtue of their charm of character. They were not truly ethical, inasmuch as they never strictly tested emotion by judgment; but they had the spirit of kindness, and in place of the temper of animosity and uncharitableness, normal in Christian apologetics, they brought good feeling. Debating little, they affirmed much. Rothe, though he confessed to a lively repugnance for the Prussian character (he being from Posen), showed a kindly tolerance in all directions, always humbly professing to see among the rationalist clergy of the school of Paulus a piety superior to his own, and "bowing before it." They in turn saluted his; and he died in peace with all men.

Another light of orthodoxy in the period was J. A. W. Neander (1789–1850), the converted Jew (David Mendel) who became a most devoted Christian, adopting the name Neander (1806) to signify his new birth. His History of the Church, though of small critical value for the origins, has made its appeal to many in virtue of its spirit of peace and tolerance. The picture given of him by James Martineau, punctuating his lectures by spitting on the floor at the end of every clause,[3] is not seductive; but his goodness of heart was obvious, and was conducive to popularity at home and abroad. Strauss exercised no such emotional attraction.

But if the advance of culture was to mean better thinking, sheer amiability and credulity *plus* scholarship could not long avail to keep orthodoxy in credit with thinking men. Neander's 'Life of Christ' counted for nothing in critical science; and the sophisticated doctrine of miracles and prophecy was a mere darkening of honest counsel. The force of reason had "planted a terrible fixed foot," and every advance made up to 1840 was to be extended in the second half of the century.

[1] *Theologische Ethik*, 3 vols. 1845–8. [2] Lichtenberger, p. 493.
[3] *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, i, 191.

Chapter VIII

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS IN TRANSITION

§ 1. *Germany*

1. In philosophy as in Biblical Criticism, the salient work of the first half of the century was done by Germans. The philosophy of Kant, while giving the theological class a new apparatus of verbal defence as against common-sense freethinking, had forced none the less on theistic philosophy a great advance from the orthodox positions. The early Kantian movement in Germany had in fact been largely a freethinking one, Kant having obviously no specifically Christian or Biblical beliefs; and the whole philosophic atmosphere was rationalistic. Thus his immediate successors, Fichte and Schelling, produced systems of which one was loudly denounced as atheistic, and the other as pantheistic,[1] despite its dualism. Neither seems to have had much influence on concrete religious opinion outside the universities;[2] and when Schelling in old age turned Catholic obscurantist, the gain to clericalism was not great. The illuminism of the Biblical scholar De Wette, who, following the "presentiment" doctrine of Fries (1805), gave a cue to Schleiermacher, made no philosophic headway against the greater thinkers. Hegel in turn (1770–1831) loosely wrought out a system[3] of which the great merit is to substitute the conception of existence as relation for the nihilistic idealism of Fichte and the unsolved dualism of Schelling. This system he latterly adapted to practical exigencies[4] by formulating, as Kant had done, a philosophic Trinity, and hardily defining Christianity as "Absolute Religion" in comparison with the various forms of "Natural Religion." Nevertheless, he counted in a great degree as a disintegrating influence, and was in a very practical way anti-Christian.

More explicitly than Kant, he admitted that the *Aufklärung*, the freethinking movement of the past generation, had made good its case so far as it went; and though, by the admission of admirers, he took for granted without justification that it had carried its point with the world at large,[5] he was chronically at strife with the theologians as such, charging them on the one hand with deserting the dogmas which he

[1] Cp. Saintes, *Hist. crit. du rationalisme en Allemagne*, p. 323. [2] *Id.* pp. 322–4.
[3] *Phænomenology of the Spirit* (1807); *Logic* (1812); *Philosophy of Right* (1821).
[4] As to Hegel's mental development cp. Dr. Beard on "Strauss, Hegel, and their Opinions," in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*, 1845, pp. 3–4.
[5] E. Caird, *Hegel*, 1883, p. 94.

re-stated,[1] and on the other declaring that the common run of them "know as little of God as a blind man sees of a painting, even though he handles the frame."[2] Of the belief in miracles he was simply contemptuous, outgoing the attitude of Kant, who merely dismissed them. "Whether at the marriage of Cana the guests got a little more wine or a little less is a matter of absolutely no importance; nor is it any more essential to demand whether the man with the withered hand was healed; for millions of men go about with withered and crippled limbs, whose limbs no man heals." On the story of the marks made for the information of the angel on the Hebrew huts at the Passover he asks: "Would the angel not have known them without these marks?", adding: "This faith has no real interest for Spirit."[3] Such writing, from the orthodox point of view, was not compensated for by a philosophy of Christianity which denaturalized its dogmas, and a presentment of the God-idea and of moral law which made religion alternately a phase of philosophy and a form of political utilitarianism.

On the other hand Hegel chronically appealed to the clerical mind by offering arbitrary accommodations to dogma. After explicitly endorsing the position of Meiners, taken from Hume, that magic and fetishism are the universal forms of the earliest religion—thus flatly rejecting the dogma of a preliminary revelation of monotheism to all mankind—he homologates the doctrine of the Fall in a stupefying fashion.[4] The claim that his lectures are "the true 'sources' of the evolution principle as applied to the study of religion"[5] will not bear scrutiny; for the idea is implicit in Vico, in Hume, and in Meiners; and Hegel's dictum that primitive man "is wild, is evil, is as he ought not to be," that "as he is by nature, he is as he ought not to be,"[6] is subversive of any universal evolutionary conception. Alternately he attracts confidence by the vigour of his critical judgment, and repels it by the arbitrary, dogmatic, and incogitable quality of the many verbalist pronouncements which make us understand how Schopenhauer could regard him as a charlatan.

As to the impression made by Hegel on most Christians, compare Hagenbach, *German Rationalism* (Eng. tr. of *Kirchengeschichte*), pp. 364–9; Renan, *Études d'histoire religieuse*, 5e édit. p. 406; J. D. Morell, *Histor. and Crit. View of the Spec. Philos. of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. 1847, ii, 189–91; Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, Pt. I, pp. 135–41, 176; Eschenmenger, *Die Hegel'sche Religions-philosophie*, 1834; quoted in Beard's *Voices of the Church*, p. 8; Leo, *Die Hegelingen*, 1838; and Reinhard, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 2nd ed. 1839, pp. 753–4—also cited by Beard, pp. 9–12.

[1] E.g. *Philos. of Religion*, introd. Eng. tr. i, 38-40.
[2] *Id.* p. 41. Cp. pp. 216–7.
[3] *Id.* p. 219.
[4] *Id.* p. 278.
[5] *Id.* Editor's pref. p. viii.
[6] *Id.* p. 276.

The gist of Hegel's rehabilitation of Christianity is well set forth by Prof. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison in his essay on *The Philosophy of Religion in Kant and Hegel* (rep. in *The Philos. Radicals and other Essays*; 1907), ch. iii. Considered in connection with his demonstration that in politics the Prussian State was the ideal government, it is seen to be even more of an arbitrary and unveridical accommodation to the social environment than Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft.* It approximates intellectually to the process by which the neo-Platonists and other eclectics of the classic decadence found a semblance of allegorical or symbolical justification for every item in the old theology. Nothing could be more false to the spirit of Hegel's general philosophy than the representing of Christianity as a culmination or "ultimate" of all religion; and nothing, in fact, was more readily seen by his contemporaries. He had taught a historico-philosophical doctrine of "evolution by antagonism"; and with this his concrete conclusions had no logical coherence.

We who look back, however, may take a more lenient view of Hegel's process of adaptation than was taken in the next generation by Haym, who, in his *Hegel und seine Zeit* (1857), presented him as always following the prevailing fashion in thought, and lending himself as the tool of reactionary government. Hegel's officialism was in the main probably wholehearted. Even as Kant felt driven to do something for social conservation at the outbreak of the French Revolution, and Fichte to shape for his country the sinister ideal of *The Closed Industrial State*, so Hegel, after seeing Prussia shaken to its foundations at the battle of Jena and being turned out of his own house by the looting French soldiers, was very naturally impelled to support the existing State by quasi-philosophico-religious considerations. It was an abandonment of the true function of philosophy; but it may have been done in all good faith. An intense political conservatism was equally marked in Strauss, who dreaded "demagogy," and in Schopenhauer, who left part of his fortune to the fund for the widows and families of soldiers killed or injured in the revolutionary strifes of 1848. It came in their case from the same source—an alarmed memory of social convulsion, such as inspired the "constructive" dreams of Saint Simon and Comte in France. The fact remains that Hegel had no real part in the State religion which he crowned with formulas.

2. Not only does Hegel's conception of the Absolute make deity simply the eternal process of the universe, and the divine consciousness indistinguishable from the total consciousness of mankind,[1] but his

[1] Cp. Strauss, *Streitschriften*, Heft iii; Morell, as cited, and pp. 195–6; and Feuerbach, as summarized by Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrh.* p. 390.

abstractions lend themselves equally to all creeds;[1] and some of the most revolutionary of the succeeding movements of German thought—as those of Vatke, Strauss,[2] Feuerbach, and Marx—professedly founded on him. It is certainly a striking testimony to the influence of Hegel that six such powerful innovators as Vatke[3] in Old-Testament, Baur and Bruno Bauer and Strauss in New-Testament criticism, Feuerbach in the philosophy of religion, and Marx in social philosophy, should at first fly the Hegelian flag. It can hardly have been that Hegel's formulas sufficed to generate the criticism they all brought to bear upon their subject matter: rather we must suppose that their naturally powerful minds were attracted by the critical and reconstructive aspects of his doctrine; but the philosophy which stimulated them must have had great affinities for revolution, as well as for all forms of the idea of evolution. In respect of his formal championship of Christianity Hegel's method, arbitrary even for him, appealed neither to the orthodox nor, with a few exceptions,[4] to his own disciples, some of whom, as Strauss, Feuerbach, and Ruge, at length definitely renounced Christianity.[5] Bruno Bauer at first opposed Strauss, and afterwards went even further than he, professing Hegelianism all the while.[6] In 1854 Heine told his French readers that there were in Germany "fanatical monks of atheism" who would willingly burn Voltaire as a besotted deist;[7] and Heine himself, in his last years of suffering and of revived poetic religiosity, could see in Hegel's system only atheism.

3. After Hegel, the most prominent name among German philosophers is Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), the most definitely antitheistic of all, though probably not the most influential on the side of practical rationalism. His chief work, 'The World as Will and Idea'[8] (1819), is a nihilistic reduction of the universe to illusion, a reversion to the Illusionism of the Hindu Vedantas, which Schopenhauer extolled, with the gospel of Buddhism. He is in fact the outstanding philosopher of Pessimism, of which term, however, he offers no logical justification. With this soothing doctrine there is bound up, through the whole of Schopenhauer's work, a quantity of polemic unequalled in the output of his predecessors. Admiring yet criticizing Plato, Hume, and Kant, he

[1] Cp. Michelet as cited by Morell, ii, 192–3.

[2] As to Strauss cp. Beard, as above cited, pp. 21–2, 30; and Zeller, *David Friedrich Strauss*, Eng. tr. pp. 35, 47–8, 71–2, etc.

[3] As to Vatke see Pfleiderer, as cited p. 252 *sq.*; Cheyne, *Founders of O. T. Criticism*, 1893, p. 135.

[4] E.g. Dr. Hutchison Stirling. See his trans. of Schwegler's *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, 6th ed. p. 438 *sq.*

[5] Baur, last cit. p. 389.

[6] Cp. Hagenbach, pp. 369–72; Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, pp. 387–8. On Bauer's critical development and academic career see Baur, *Kirchengesch. des 19ten Jahrh.* pp. 386–9.

[7] *Geständnisse*: Werke, iv, 33. Cp. iii, 110.

[8] *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.*

heaped derision on Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel; and his criticism of theism and Christianity is uncompromising.[1]

That such a philosophy should not multiply rationalists is very intelligible. Men who have been told that theism is nonsense; that its pantheistic exponents are equally absurd; that life is not worth living; yet that Art is of immense importance as being somehow not subservient to the Will, were not in general likely to abandon the intellectual soporifics they already had. Schopenhauer's philosophy, with all its energy of polemic and analysis, is the expression of temperament rather than of pure thought; seeing that, while thought may abstractly disvalue the motives of life all round, the fact remains that they sustain life, and philosophy exists *for* life, or for nothing. Schopenhauer's "Will" is finally incogitable. Dying at an advanced age, unphilosophically at odds with life, he felt himself outshone by charlatans.

It can be contended, certainly, that when the philosophies of Kant and Hegel and Fichte are found to crumble under logical criticism, that of Schopenhauer will at least rank with theirs as a reading of the universe through the eyes of one thinking Ego, bent on expressing its personal equation. He certainly harbours (as is impartially acknowledged by Mr. T. Whittaker in his able monograph) many contradictions; but so do his corrivals. Thus the attitude of treating him as wholly "off the road" of philosophy is a critical extravagance. No thoughtful person can doubt that for thousands of thinking and feeling men Schopenhauer puts in intellectual form a dominating impression of things. And that quasi-intuition or emotional resultant has strictly as much philosophic status as any quasi-optimistic philosophy of theism.

But there remains a difference between a philosophy which is essentially an expression of feeling and those which at least *seek* to reach a conception of the Cosmos in terms of *all* knowledge. When Schopenhauer, teaching renunciation of life, fled to escape a pestilence, men were entitled to say that he had not assimilated his own doctrine. Pessimism which figures as a mood to live by and not to die by is in a manner its own confutation. When it is found to be practically embraced and consummated only in an access of despair, it ranks as a physiological rather than a philosophical decision, remaining a *datum* for a complete philosophy of life. To follow up the conception that we are Puppets of the Will to Live with a doctrine which would make us Puppets of the Will to Die is to leave the philosophic situation unchanged.

[1] The fundamental hostility of Schopenhauer to theology is particularly marked in his essay *On the Basis of Morality* (1840), where he demonstrates that the whole ethic of Kant is but a restatement of Theological Morality in a new disguise. Schopenhauer's criticism has never been rebutted. The subject is rehandled in the present writer's *Short History of Morals.*

4. From the collisions of philosophic systems in Germany, however, there at length emerged two great practical freethinking forces, the teachings of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72), who was obliged to give up his lecturing at Erlangen in 1830 after the issue of his *Thoughts upon Death and Immortality*, and Ludwig Büchner, who was deprived of his chair of clinic at Tübingen in 1855 for his *Force and Matter*. The former, originally a Hegelian, expressly broke away from his Master, declaring that, whereas Hegel belonged to the "Old Testament" of modern philosophy, he himself would set forth the New, wherein Hegel's fundamentally incoherent treatment of deity (as the total process of things on the one hand, and an objective personality on the other) should be righted.[1] Feuerbach accordingly, in his *Essence of Christianity*[2] (1841) and *Essence of Religion* (1851), supplied one of the first adequate modern philosophical statements of the positively rationalistic position as against Christianity and theism, in terms of philosophic as well as historical insight—a statement to which there is no characteristically modern answer save in terms of the refined sentimentalism of the youthful Renan,[3] averse alike from scientific precision and intellectual consistency.

Feuerbach's special service consists in the rebuttal of the metaphysic in which religion had chronically taken refuge from the straightforward criticism of freethinkers, in itself admittedly unanswerable. They had shown many times over its historic falsity, its moral incoherence, and its philosophic self-contradiction; and the more astute official defenders, leaving to the less competent the task of re-vindicating miracles and prophecy and defending the indefensible, proceeded to shroud the particular defeat in a pseudo-philosophic process which claimed for all religion alike an indestructible inner truth, in the light of which the instinctive believer could again make shift to affirm his discredited credences. It was this process which Feuerbach exploded, for all who cared to read him.

He had gone through it. Intensely religious in his youth, he had found in the teaching of Hegel an attractive philosophic garb for his intuitional thought. But a wider concern than Hegel's for actual knowledge, and for the knowledge of the actual, moved him to say to his teacher, on leaving: "Two years have I attached myself to you; two years have I completely devoted to your philosophy. Now I feel the necessity of starting in the directly opposite way: I am going to study anatomy."[4] It may have been that what saved him from the Hegelian fate of turning to the end the squirrel-cage of conformist philosophy was the personal experience which put him in fixed antagonism to the governmental forces that Hegel was moved to serve. The hostility evoked by his *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* completed his alienation from the

[1] Baur gives a good summary, *Kirchengeschichte*, pp. 390–4.
[2] *Das Wesen des Christenthums.*
[3] 'M. Feuerbach et la nouvelle école hégélienne,' in *Études d'histoire religieuse.*
[4] A. Kohut, *Ludwig Feuerbach, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 1909, p. 48.

official side of things, and left him to the life of a devoted truth-seeker—a career as rare in Germany as elsewhere. The upshot was that Feuerbach, in the words of Strauss, "broke the double yoke in which, under Hegel, philosophy and theology still went."[1]

For the task he undertook he had consummately equipped himself. In a series of four volumes (*History of Modern Philosophy from Bacon to Spinoza*, 1833; *Exposition and Criticism of the Leibnitzian Philosophy*, 1837; *Pierre Bayle*, 1838; *On Philosophy and Christianity*, 1839; *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy*, 1839), he explored the field of philosophy, and re-studied theology in the light of moral and historical criticism, before he produced his masterpiece, *The Essence of Christianity*. Here the tactic of Hegel is turned irresistibly on the Hegelian defence; and religion, defiantly declared by Hegel to be an affair of self-consciousness,[2] is shown to be in very truth nothing else. "Such as are a man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. Consciousness of God is self-consciousness; knowledge of God is self-knowledge."[3] This of course is openly what Hegelian theism is in logical effect—philosophic atheism; and though Feuerbach at times disclaimed the term, he declares in his preface that "atheism, at least in the sense of this work, is the secret of religion itself; that religion itself.....in its heart, in its essence, believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature." The *idea* here is not new, as some of Feuerbach's followers have supposed: it was familiar in the eighteenth century to Sir Thomas Browne; but it was now put for the first time with philosophic adequacy.

In the preliminary section on 'The Essence of Religion' he makes his position clear once for all: "A God who has abstract predicates has also an abstract existence.....Not the attribute of the divinity, but the divineness or deity of the attribute, is the first true Divine Being. Thus what theology and philosophy have held to be God, the Absolute, the Infinite, is not God; but that which they have held not to be God, is God—namely the attribute, the quality, whatever has reality. Hence, he alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being—for example, love, wisdom, justice—are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing.....These have an intrinsic, independent reality; they force their recognition upon man by their very nature; they are self-evident truths to him; they approve, they attest themselves..... The idea of God is dependent on the idea of justice, of benevolence....."

[1] *Die Halben und die Ganzen*, p. 50. "Feuerbach a ruiné le système de Hegel et fondé le positivisme." A. Lévy, *La philosophie de Feuerbach et son influence sur la litt. allemande*, 1904, introd. p. xxii.

[2] E.g. "All knowledge, all conviction, all piety.....is based on the principle that in the spirit, as such, the consciousness of God exists immediately with the consciousness of itself." *Philos. of Relig.* Eng. tr. introd. i, 42–3.

[3] *Essence of Christianity*, Eng. tr. 1854, p. 12.

And in the epilogue to the last volume of his works he insists that Morality cannot be evolved from "the bare I or the bare Reason without feeling, but only from the conjunction of I and Thou."

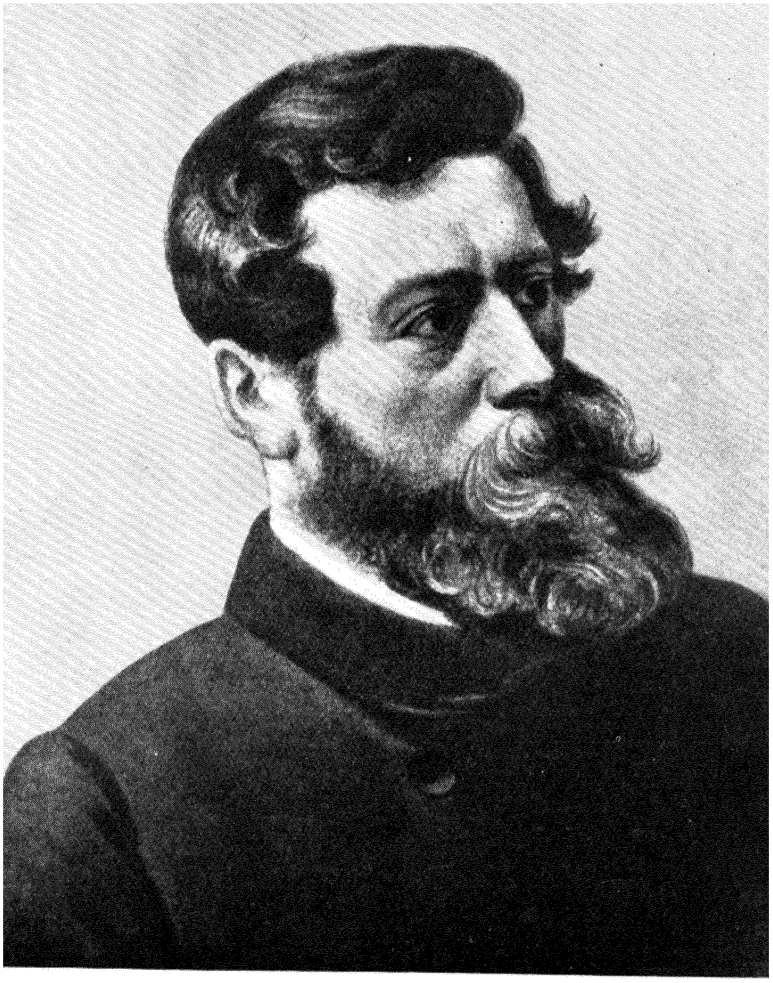
This is obviously the answer to Baur, who, after paying tribute to the personality of Feuerbach, and presenting a tolerably fair summary of his critical philosophy, can find no answer to it save the inept protest that it is one-sided in respect of its reduction of religion to the subjective (the very course insisted on by a hundred defenders!); that it favours the communistic and other extreme tendencies of the time; and that it brings everything "under the rude rule of egoism."[1] Here a philosophic and an aspersive meaning are furtively combined in one word. The scientific subjectivism of Feuerbach's analysis of religion is much less a vindication or acceptance of "rude egoism" than is the Christian formula of "God's will" a condonation of murder. The restraint of egoism by altruism lies in human character and polity alike for the rationalist and for the irrationalist, as Baur must have known well enough after his long survey of Church history. His really unworthy escape from Feuerbach's criticism, under cover of alternate cries of "Communism" and "egoism"—a self-stultification which needs no comment—is simply one more illustration of the fashion in which, since the time of Kant, philosophy in Germany as elsewhere has been chronically demoralized by resort to non-philosophical tests. "Max Stirner" (pen-name of Johann Caspar Schmidt, 1806–56) carried the philosophic "egoism" of Feuerbach about as far in words as might be; but his work on the Ego (*Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*, 1845) remains an ethical curiosity rather than a force.[2]

It is true that Feuerbach did not develop his doctrine consistently and continuously. The outcry against his *Wesen des Christenthums*, by resort to claptrap and vituperation, moved him to an ever more emphatic insistence on his antagonism to all the conventions of theism. Where Strauss, at his outset, was tempted to make irrelevant concessions about the "personality" of Jesus, Feuerbach was provoked into leaving his philosophic ground and propounding an "anthropology" which reached the punning statement that "man is what he eats" (*was der Mensch isst, das ist er*)[3]—a wasted epigram (pointing to mental pabulum) which evoked an endless series of rebuttals, beginning with the item that man may be a good deal affected mentally by what he drinks. The rebel thus partly masked his chief dialectic fortress, the thesis that man's "divine" is wholly

[1] *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, pp. 393–4.

[2] Cp. A. Lévy, as cited, ch. iv.

[3] In the Vorwort to his last treatise, *The Mystery of the Sacrifice*, of which he makes his epigram the sub-title, he observes that this saying is the only one of his which certain people remember. He accordingly proceeds to a humorous esoteric expatiation.



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his own creation, and must always remain so. In the end, however, he rectifies his ethic firmly enough.

The main improvement in the position is that whereas he had, as above noted, called the non-moral egoist an atheist, thus nominally confusing the denier of an objective Theos with the (often theological) denier of the human moral law of reciprocity, and so making the word meaningless, he finally called himself an atheist, as he was, in the natural sense of the term. But the *Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen zum Wesen des Christenthums*, which form the first volume of the *Sämmtliche Werke*, are not solidary with the original book.

Ludwig Noack, who in his youth had quite ineffectually combated it in his *Offenbarung und Mythologie*, gives in his mature *Philosophiegeschichtliches Lexikon* (1879) a quite judicial account of Feuerbach's life and work, and justly pronounces that he had not realized the difficulty of framing a complete philosophic system. "The nerve of his philosophizing was divinatory mysticism and an aphoristic thinking in sparkling *aperçus*."

Feuerbach's own claim (in his posthumous Aphorisms) was to have striven to make thought and study not harder for men but easier, concentrating on essentials. This he achieved. The philosophic upshot is, in Noack's words, that "The necessary consequence of theology or theism is Pantheism, and the necessary consequence of Pantheism is Atheism, which is only Pantheism inside out, as that is only theological Atheism."

Noack himself might have been supposed, in respect of his *Lexikon*, to have profited by Feuerbach's service. The *Lexikon* is an incomparably sounder performance than the *Offenbarung und Mythologie*, which is deprived of scientific value by its theological presuppositions. As the *Lexikon* follows by a considerable interval of years the series of six volumes in which its author journeyed 'From Eden to Golgotha' (2 vols. 1868), and 'From the cradle of Jordan to Golgotha' (4 vols. 1870–2), elaborating a fantastic Life of Jesus in which Judas is the beloved apostle and the author of a primitive gospel, it may be that Noack, more fortunate than some of his contemporaries, passed from subjective extravagance to an objective sanity in the course of studying philosophy historically.

5. On Feuerbach's *Essence of Religion* followed the equally startling explosion of Büchner's *Force and Matter* (1855), which in large measure, but with much greater mastery of scientific detail in the later editions, does for the plain man of his century what d'Holbach in his chief work sought to do for his day. By Büchner's avowal, he was first inspired by the 'Circulation of Life' (*Kreislauf des Lebens*, 1852) of Jakob Moleschott[1]

[1] Called by Lange "the father of the modern materialistic movement." It may be remembered that Mill in turn had called Bentham "the father of English innovation."

(1822–93), a specialist in physiology, who put his doctrine by way of a scientific exposition. Büchner's treatise was in comparison popular. Constantly vilified, even in the name of philosophy, in the exact tone and spirit of animal irritation which marks the religious vituperation of all forms of rationalism in previous ages, and constantly misrepresented as professing to explain an infinite universe when it does but show the hollowness of all supernaturalist explanations,[1] the book steadily holds its ground as a manual of anti-mysticism.[2] Between them, Feuerbach and Büchner may be said to have framed for their age an atheistic "System of Nature," concrete and abstract, without falling into the old error of substituting one apriorism for another. Whosoever endorses Baur's protest against the "one-sidedness" of Feuerbach, who treats of religion on its chosen ground of self-consciousness, has but to turn to Büchner's study of the objective world and see whether his cause fares any better.

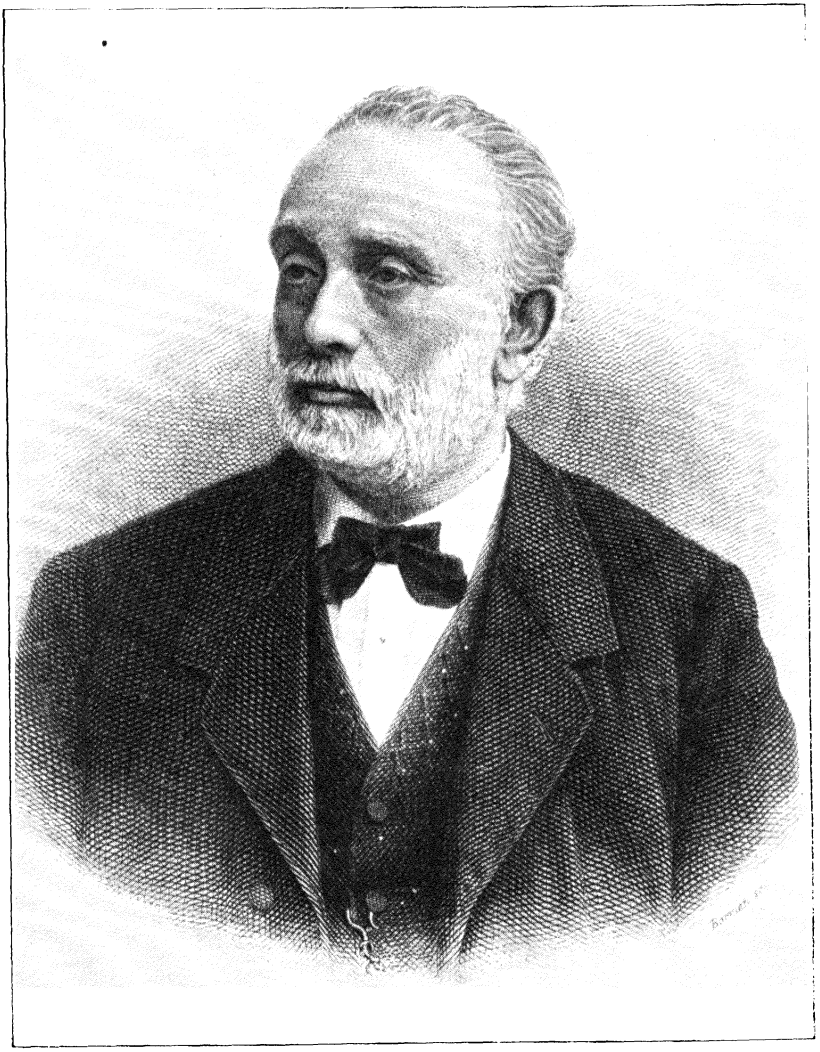
By publishing *Kraft und Stoff* Büchner lost his professorial chair at Tübingen; but the celebrity of the book, which was translated into most of the languages of Europe, gave him a breadth of influence which he could not have attained as a professor. He developed his position in 'Nature and Spirit' (1857), and soon adopted Darwinism. By his series of treatises on 'Man in the Past, Present, and Future' (1869), 'Materialism, its History and Influence on Society' (1873), 'The Idea of God' (1874), 'Mind in Animals' (1880), and 'Light and Life" (1882) he became one of the chief educators of the German people in right thinking; and if his peace-loving spirit, which raised him above all racial prejudice, had been by them assimilated, their history would have taken happier lines. In his native town, Darmstadt, where he practised as a physician till his death (1899), he had the universal respect earned by a transparently sound and kindly character. One of his notable acts was to make public announcement that whereas by State law all citizens were held to make profession of some public religion—a profession to be testified to by *one* attendance at church each year—he respectfully declared that he made no religious profession whatever. Scolded for this by the opportunists, he had the enhanced respect of honest people.

6. Arnold Ruge (1802–80), who was of the philosophical school of Feuerbach,[3] gave his life to a disinterested propaganda of democracy and light, incurring in youth a long imprisonment; and if in 1870 he capitulated to the new Empire, and thereby won a small pension for the two last years of his life, he was but going the way of many another veteran,

[1] Büchner expressly rejected the term "materialism" because of its misleading implications or connotations. Cp. in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh* the discussion in Pt. II, ch. i, § 3 (by J. M. R.).

[2] While the cognate works of Carl Vogt and Moleschott have gone out of print, Büchner's, recast again and again, continues to be republished.

[3] A. Lévy, as cited, ch. ii.



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dazzled in his old age by very old fires. Like Bruno Bauer, and in some degree Strauss, he finally exemplified in his life the intellectual tragedy of the Germany of that age, the turning from the free life of the spirit to the pursuit of the lure of power. But his work was already done. His *Addresses on Religion, its Rise and Fall: to the educated among its Reverers*[1] (1869) is a lucid and powerful performance, proceeding from a mythological analysis of religion to a cordial plea for rationalism in all things. The charge of "materialism" was for him no bugbear. "Truly," he writes, "we are not without the earth and the solar system, not without the plants and the animals, not without head. But whoever has head enough to understand science and its conquests in the field of nature and of mind (*Geist*) knows also that the material world rests in the immaterial, moves in it, and is by it animated, freed, and ensouled; that soul and idea are incarnate in Nature, but that also logic, idea, spirit, and science free themselves out of Nature, become abstracted and as immaterial Power erect their own realm, the realm of spirit in State, science, and art."[2]

This formulation, if rather literary than scientific, may serve as the dismissal of the polemic which affects to treat the scientific process loosely termed Materialism as a denial of the very existence of the phenomena of consciousness and reflection, which Spiritualism idly hypostatizes as "cause." Shelley, earnestly facing reality, avowed at once that "mind" cannot create "matter," and that "matter" cannot "account for mind." The answer is that the duality is irreducible save by an abstraction which avows the infinite cosmos to be incogitable. Ruge's statement is philosophically lax in that it treats Mind as an Absolute, when he had better have taken Spencer's course of avowing that the data point, if anywhere, to the inference of something transcending the "mind" which we know only as the faltering instrument of man. But he comes near the scientific conclusion.

§ 2. *Britain*

1. The disregard of philosophy in England throughout the eighteenth century after Berkeley, like the disregard of mathematical astronomy after Newton, is one of the concomitants of the direction of national energy to imperial and commercial expansion. Ethics, indeed, continued to be debated with energy and some competence; but abstract philosophy appears to have been viewed askance after the Berkeleian dialectic had made it newly perplexing. The higher mathematics had been left to France; and the development of philosophy was left to Scotland; Hume

[1] *Reden über Religion, ihr Entstehen und Vergehen, an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verehrern*—a parody of the title of the famous work of Schleiermacher, substituting *Verehrern* for *Verächtern*. Dr. Hastie, the translator of Lichtenberger, commits a notable "howler" by making Ruge's title read *Verächtern*. [2] Work cited, p. 119.

slowly emerging for the English thinking world as the decisive thinker of the age; while Adam Smith's 'Theory of Moral Sentiments' (1759) seems for a time to have eclipsed in interest the rather more important work done by Englishmen.

Hartley's Christian Materialism (1749), the most curious philosophic product of its age, made small headway, though it was followed up by the Unitarian Priestley. At the close of the century philosophic study in Britain was in evidence mainly in Scotland, notably at Edinburgh University, where Dugald Stewart (1753–1828) for a whole generation ranked as an educational force in respect of his handling of that subject in particular. At Oxford it was taught in a merely traditionary fashion, in lamentable contrast to what was going on in Germany;[1] and in Scotland in the 'thirties things had fallen to a similar level.[2]

In 1797 there is reviewed in the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* Dr. John Gillies'[3] translation of the 'Ethics' and 'Politics' of Aristotle, with introductions and notes. The reviewer, a marked exception to the general run of rabid contributors to that periodical, puts it as beyond dispute that "for near two centuries Aristotle's writings, with the exception of a few treatises, have been mouldering in the dust of libraries"; that his speculative works are "now almost totally forgotten," and "the practical very little known even by Greek readers"; and that the ethics and politics in particular are "unless to a few, very little known."[4]

As Gillies stresses Aristotle's practice of the experiential and inductive method, the reviewer's praise, though mixed with reasonable criticism, might have been expected to be ill received by his audience; but in later instalments the matter is put on a sound political footing. Gillies was, as other reviewers take note, a good Anti-Jacobin, concerned to point out that "although our great Locke was a worthy and religious man, yet his writings led to a scepticism eventually hurtful to religion."[5] On the other hand, as the first reviewer announces, partly in small capitals, "Aristotle is no friend to abstract politics. What he finds productive of happiness in the greatest number of cases, and most consonant to the most usual character of mankind, is that of which we of this country experience the inestimable blessing."[6] On that view Aristotle is rightly to be revived.

In 1799 a fresh challenge had been given to all religious philosophy in England by the issue of the translation, from Kant, of 'The Only Possible Argument for the Demonstration of the Existence of God'—an early essay by him (1763), superseded by the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). It was doubtless due to the political reaction that this challenge created no

[1] Veitch's *Memoir of Sir William Hamilton*, 1869, p. 54. Cp. Hamilton's own *Discussions*, 1852, p. 187 (rep. of article of 1839). [2] Veitch, p. 214.

[3] B. 1747; d. 1836. Author of a once popular but long obsolete *History of Greece* (1786) which was translated into French and German.

[4] *Review* cited, vol. i, pp. 255–7. [5] *Id.* p. 360. [6] *Id.* p. 398.

perceptible stir in the English world. Amounting as it did to a comprehensive cancelment of all the long series of quasi-philosophical arguments for Theism, and offering as it did a new argument in terms of the necessities of man's moral nature, Kant's criticism created, for all who could follow its reasoning, a new dilemma. Obviously there was no new "demonstration," as men understood that word. As well could it be argued that the "need" for a future life was a demonstration of the certainty of that. Hume had forestalled such a plea. On the other hand, the cogent confutation of all ordinary theistic pleas called for an attempt at an answer. It was not forthcoming. What philosophy there was in the camp of orthodoxy, at least for purposes of propaganda, was for the time being that of the "Common Sense" Scottish school, destined to be superseded in the next generation by subtler systems. Meantime, the Scottish School was Christian, whereas that of Kant was not.

The translation entitled 'The Only Possible Argument for the Demonstration of the Existence of God' (1799) appears to have had a very small circulation, and is a very scarce book. Kant had previously been introduced to English readers by F. A. Nitsch's 'View of Kant's principles concerning Man, the World, Deity' (1796); and 'The Only Possible Argument' formed part of a translation of Kant's 'Essays and Treatises' (2 vols. 1798). To this was added 'Elements of the Critical Philosophy,' published (along with a translation of Three Philological Essays by Adelung) by A. F. M. Willich, M.D., in 1798–9. Willich, who supplies a "reasoned bibliography" of Kant's works, notes (p. 45) concerning the 'Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason,' that "If we compare the principal tenets of the Christian Religion with the principles of the Kantian system we shall be agreeably surprised to find that the former are perfectly consistent with the latter." He notes only Kant's approval of Christian ethics, and says nothing of his rejection of Christian dogma.

2. The "Common Sense" philosophy of Dr. Thomas Reid (1710–96), eagerly welcomed alike in Scotland and England as a rebuttal of the scepticism of Hume, and only respectfully criticized by Stewart, who was in disagreement with it, was in reality an evasion of the philosophic problem, which Reid failed to grasp, and on which he fatally contradicts himself; and Thomas Brown (1778–1820), who had partly seen this, won only a temporary though a wide vogue by his equally indecisive reconstruction. His highly popular lectures (20th ed. 1860), like his treatise on 'Cause and Effect' (1804), were of value chiefly as creating a widespread interest in philosophic matters. Competent readers knew that Reid had not answered Hume; and for the time the more intelligent part of the theological world turned eagerly to the more intricate answer of Kant, though that too was later to be found a broken reed.

A very fair and competent estimate of the work of Reid, and, on a smaller scale, of Stewart and Brown, is to be found in Dr. S. V.

Rasmussen's 'The Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton: a Study' (Copenhagen and London, 1925). But the philosophic bankruptcy of Reid is recognized alike in Professor Henry Laurie's 'Scottish Philosophy in its National Development' (Glasgow, 1902) and in the 'Scottish Philosophy' of Professor A. Seth (1885). Scottish scholarship has repudiated the "Scottish School."

The entire procedure of the Scottish School had in fact been vitiated by that dominating purpose of "defending religion" which had warped the work of Berkeley, as the hope of replacing traditional religion by a new authoritarian philosophy of the universe and of conduct had flawed the more powerful work of Kant. All alike stood on a lower logical basis than the science which sought sheer truth irrespective of consequences either dreaded or hoped. It was inevitable that a philosophic search for arguments to support the traditional authority of creeds and dogmas and Sacred Books *not* subjected to scientific scrutiny should discredit itself as soon as it was critically faced. If philosophy was to be revived, it must be on worthier lines.

3. It was over practical issues, accordingly, that new thought germinated in England. If philosophy was to be officially made a mere shield for religion, the fit counter-stroke was a philosophic scrutiny of religion as a social factor. The proof of the change wrought in the direction of native thought is seen in the personalities of the men who, in the teeth of the reaction, applied rationalistic method to ethics and psychology. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and James Mill (1773–1836) were in their kindred fields among the most convinced and active freethinkers of their day, the former attacking both clericalism and orthodoxy;[1] while the latter, no less pronounced in his private opinions, more cautiously built up a rigorously naturalistic psychology in his 'Analysis of the Human Mind' (1829). Bentham's utilitarianism, with its principle of "Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number" (borrowed from Hutcheson[2]) as the guide of conduct, was so essentially anti-Christian that he could hardly have been more disliked by discerning theists if he had avowed his share in the authorship of the 'Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion.'[3]

The wonder is, on retrospect, that the ethical issue as between Christianity and reason did not arise in a more directly polemic form in the academic discussion, as it was doing among the militant freethinkers. James Mill, we know, held that the consummated theological doctrine of God reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise.[4] But that opinion could not be published. Less radical criticism gradually emerged. The Christian doctrine of forgiveness of all

[1] In his *Church of Englandism and its Catechism Examined* (1818), and *Not Paul but Jesus* (1823), by "Gamaliel Smith."

[2] The idea, which is ancient, received its English form from Hutcheson, but it seems to have reached Bentham through Beccaria and (or) Priestley.

[3] See above, p. 86.

[4] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 41.

sin upon profession of dogmatic belief was something flagrantly anti-ethical; and the religious treatment of all moral law as a thing solely revealed by the Scriptures was so destructive of sound moral feeling that Paley, like many churchmen before him, had sought to found moral judgment on tested social utility. Against that, in turn, theistic sentiment spontaneously revolted; and Carlyle, in *Sartor Resartus*, dismisses utilitarianism with the arrogant contempt which he bestowed upon all inquiries of which he missed the meaning—he himself, the while, vending the crudest utilitarian ethic in regard to the French Revolution.[1]

> Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable in ethical debate, then as now, than the fashion in which utilitarianism, which is a plea for the application of the utility *test* to all quasi-moral impulses, is spurned by men who are at bottom utilitarians of the most uncritical kind. The central gospel plea for faith is "What shall it *profit* a man" if he should ultimately lose his soul? No question of a test of *truth* is conceived. The *practice* of historic Christianity, in respect of all the leading rites, is utilitarian through and through; and the most acceptable defence of the creed has always been that, whether true or not, it promoted civilization, law, and order. Finally, the theologian, challenged to justify prayer either theologically or philosophically, habitually falls back on the plea that, even as auto-suggestion, it *answers*, as a stimulant. The plea of "experience"—an empirical utilitarianism—is similarly used to override critical reason in general. The test of truth is always ignored; the test of an unproved but presumed utility always obtruded. Popular Christianity, in fact, retains the ignorant utilitarianism, as it does the ignorant materialism, of pagan religion in general.

Emerson, in turn, is found at his outset deeply conscious of the singular lack of religious insight in the English publicists whom he had met—Coleridge, Landor, Carlyle, and Wordsworth—inasmuch as they could not religiously see the moral independence of the individual soul.[2] For his own part he alternates intuitively between the doctrine of individual moral judgment and the affirmation of divine control, never once facing the philosophical dilemma of the divine control of the wrong-doer. From that logical blind-alley the only rational escape lay in the critical development of the utilitarian principle. Scientifically developed it could not be till it was studied in the light of the evolution theory; but Bentham inaugurated the new departure.

Whether or not the *Analysis* was planned to undermine all forms of theism, it does on the one hand supply a non-theistic doctrine of ethics, in terms of utilitarianism, and on the other hand powerfully impugns all theistic ethic which proceeds on the doctrine of present or future rewards

[1] E.g., his disposal of the massacres by contrasting the *numbers killed* with those killed in war. [2] *Journals*, ed. 1890, vol. iii (1833–5), pp. 186, 189 *sq.*

or punishments supernaturally awarded. The small vogue of the book, of course, did not leave the freethinkers destitute of a rationalistic ethic. The humanistic conception of ethics, implicit in so much even of the theological argument, had been quite definitely and popularly set forth by Volney, whose *Law of Nature*[1] circulated in translation as early as 1833, and in the *Course of Popular Lectures* of Frances Wright (1829).

But Bentham's ostensible restriction of his logic to practical problems of law and morals secured him a wider influence than was wielded by any of the higher publicists of his day. The whole tendency of his school was intensely rationalistic; and it indirectly affected all thought by its treatment of economics, which from Hume and Smith onwards had been practically divorced from theology. Even clerical economists, such as Malthus and Chalmers, alike orthodox in religion, furthered naturalism in philosophy in spite of themselves by their insistence on the law of population, which is the negation of divine benevolence as popularly conceived. A not unnatural result was a reinforcement of the religious fear of all reasoning whatever, and a disparagement of the very faculty of reason. This, however, was sharply resisted by the more cultured champions of orthodoxy,[2] to the great advantage of critical discussion.

4. How little atheistic thinking was in vogue in the period may be gathered from the 'Sketch of the Natural Laws of Man' by Dr. G. Spurzheim the phrenologist, published in English from his French MS. in 1828. This is a kind of ethical catechism, in which morality is quite definitely grounded on human needs and interests, interpreted by the intelligence implanted in man by his Creator.[3] At the same time the existence of supernatural Revelation is admitted, with the proviso that it must be interpreted in accord with reason,[4] and that the official interpreters decide "arbitrarily."[5] And all the while it is declared to be the duty of man to "obey the will" of the Creator who has been declared to have imposed his will on the whole natural process of which man is declared to be part.[6] A critical reader who further noted that Nature = the First Cause, and may then be considered as synonymous with "God,"[7] might have been moved to ask whether theism was not being made as absurd as Christianity. But no such comment was then published, Spurzheim being here in safe accord with the reigning conception, alike Christian and deistic, of an Omnipotence which cannot get its own way, and of a humanity which can disobey a moral "law" declared to be part of Nature.

5. After Bentham's death, Sir James Mackintosh undertook in his 'Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Thought' (written for the eighth

[1] A comparison of Volney's *Law of Nature* with the *Analysis* suggests that the former suggested the latter. The juristic method is common to both.

[2] Cp. Morell, *Spec. Philos. of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, ii, 620; and *Life and Corr. of Whately*, by E. Jane Whately, abridged ed. p. 159.

[3] Work cited, pp. 10–12. [4] *Id.* pp. 92, 102. [5] *Id.* p. 16. [6] *Id.* p. 11. [7] *Id.* p. 10.

edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*)[1] to pull down utilitarian philosophy, professing to supersede it by a doctrine which, conceding that "the moral faculty" is formed or educed by society, added the purely verbal formula that it is yet "a law of our nature." The essay, while possessing literary merit, had thus none as philosophy; and Mackintosh took the catchpenny course of vilifying the earlier utilitarians, as Mandeville and Helvétius, and preluding with much offensive personal disparagement his criticism of Bentham and his school, of whom he had almost no personal knowledge. These personalities brought into the field James Mill, whom Mackintosh had at some points criticized not unsoundly, but who, though now drawing near his end, was much more concerned to vindicate Bentham than to vindicate himself, and accordingly wrote "with that severity of reprehension which the first feelings of indignation against an evil-doer inspire."

The *Fragment on Mackintosh* (1835) thus produced is a fitting counterstroke to that moralist, whose rather time-serving career (begun by a defence, soon retracted, of the French Revolution) is scathingly alluded to.[2] The scurrilities, falsifications, and personalities of Mackintosh are fitly chastised, and his logical laxity exposed with a murderous efficiency. But if "indignation makes good verses" under the discipline of poetic form, it is apt to deflect prose diction when the writer is much moved, and James Mill is here too savage for the purposes of style. The polemic becomes at times too personal for philosophic purposes, and the book remains rather a memento of a fray in which orthodox insolence began to experience, on this side as on others, the rebound of its own attack than a readable treatise. Its pungent punishment of Mackintosh, in fact, had little hearing, Mackintosh himself having received little attention at the time. All James Mill's previous work had been untouched with vehemence, though his character was not.

Upon one point Mackintosh and Mill had been agreed[3]—the low ebb to which ethical and philosophic study had fallen in England; though Mill's own 'Analysis of the Human Mind' (1829) had done much to remove such a reproach, and Mackintosh's Dissertation was at least fitted to provoke fresh thought. Stewart and Brown had certainly stimulated a multitude of students and readers; and Whewell, editing Mackintosh's treatise in 1836, was fain to sound a more hopeful note. The fact was that the spirit of orthodoxy in Britain had in the period of reaction paralysed the spirit of thought in the majority, and the few radical thinkers were looked upon, as Mackintosh's treatise shows, with

[1] Republished in 1836, and again in 1862, with introd. and notes by Whewell, as a counterblast to J. S. Mill. Again rep. 1872.

[2] Had Mill chosen to descend to Mackintosh's tactics, he might have noted that the moralist's career had included a period of habitual intemperance.

[3] Mackintosh, *Dissertation* cited, ed. 1872, p. 255; Mill, *Fragment on Mackintosh*, 1835, pp. iv, 31.

angry suspicion. Whewell, conscious of the prevailing inertia, looked only for a revival of orthodox activities. The course of things was to be very much otherwise.

6. A little noticed performance at the beginning of the Victorian period testifies at once to the persistence of radical thought in a time when political ferment absorbed general interest, and to the fate of disregard which can befall thinkers notably in advance of their age. The 'Discourse on Ethics of the School of Paley' (1839), by William Henry Smith (1808–72), barrister-at-law, is in many respects the most important contribution to moral philosophy between Bentham and Spencer, adding as it does to Bentham's utilitarianism a very explicit assertion of the social origin of moral ideas, and anticipating Spencer not only on that side but by an express avowal that the philosophic idea of deity led up to by modern science is not merely an Unknown but an Unknowable.[1] Professor Ferrier, who declared himself unreservedly a believer in Christian revelation,[2] and no less expressly rejected the doctrine of "an innate morality,"[3] pronounced Smith's *Discourse on Ethics* "one of the best written and most ingeniously reasoned attacks upon Cudworth's doctrine that had ever appeared."[4]

It is not, in point of fact, directed against Cudworth, but against à priori ethic in general; and the sub-title, with the adroit preface on the utilitarian basis of Paley, tells of the strategy still required to debate the issue without incurring *odium theologicum*. Smith, indeed, makes equivocal quasi-professions of Christian belief;[5] and in one passage commits the absurdity of asserting that "those few" who are enemies of religion are accustomed to anticipate "without pain" a "destitute and deplorable condition" as the sequel to its disappearance—he maintaining that this need not necessarily be the result. These equivocal positions may have been the cause of the general disregard which the book incurred; in any case, though Smith was the friend of J. S. Mill, Maurice, and Sterling, it was hardly at all discussed; and Spencer, whose religious position it lays down in advance, never mentions it. It was only in the latter part of his life that Smith attained a certain philosophic distinction through his two books *Thorndale, or the Conflict of Opinions* (1857) and *Gravenhurst, or Thoughts on Good and Evil* (1862).

These works, especially the latter, are interesting documents in the culture history of the time. *Thorndale* abounds in calmly keen thinking on the problems of human life; and *Gravenhurst*, professing to envisage a moral harmony of things, quietly traces the disintegration, already clear to the thoughtful observer, of the orthodox faith among its more thoughtful professors. "I never yet," he makes one character

[1] Work cited, p. 85.
[2] *Lectures and Philosophical Remains*, 1876, ii, 228. [3] *Id.* pp. 504–14.
[4] *The Story of William and Lucy Smith*, edited by George S. Merriam, 1889, p. 77.
[5] Cp. the memoir cited, pp 78–83.

say,[1] "attended a popular lecture on science where the lecturer did not conclude with assuring his audience that there was no discrepancy between the two great teachers, Science and Revelation; and the lecturer was always applauded for this comfortable assurance. What more certain sign could I have that there exists an uneasy feeling as to the perfect harmony between these two great teachers?" In regard to Biblical criticism—always by way of a criticism of the accommodating critics, not of the creed, and always in a dialogue in which orthodoxy has a reasoning exponent—he trenchantly exposes the moral fraud of the new doctrine of "adaptation,"[2] which represented as inspired compromises in the Judaic system the actual doctrines and practices of paganism outside Jewry.

7. In the field of philosophy may be placed the 'Discourse of Natural Theology' contributed by Lord Brougham to a new edition (1835) of Paley's 'Natural Theology.' Treated by most critics with cautious deference, it was assailed by one clerical publicist, the Rev. W. J. Irons, a loquacious but not inept controversialist, as a work of Deism, indicating no acceptance either of revelation in general or of Christianity in particular.[3] "Judging from the 'Evidences of the Design' of Lord Brougham's book," writes the critic, "I should contend that it was intended to show that a REVELATION was superfluous." Brougham had in fact referred in general with disparagement to Christian writers, and often with praise to freethinkers; and his main position that "if Natural Religion be false, Revelation cannot be true," implied the higher importance of the "natural" theistic position.

He had further substituted "Theists" for "Deists" in his reference to the purposes of the Boyle Lecture, apparently in order to further his purpose of substituting the former (respectful) term, throughout his work, for the other, which had been commonly restricted to the theistic opponents of Revelation. In point of fact, the clerical criticism appears to be well founded, all of Brougham's positions being typically deistic, and none specifically Christian. His indignation at Macaulay's denial of any argument for immortality apart from revelation[4] is thus quite intelligible. But the attack of Irons seems to have attracted no general attention, nobody being anxious to claim the unreliable Brougham for freethought, while his political backers had no wish to raise such an issue. Irons, besides, cannot have been a *persona grata* to the ordinary orthodox Englishman. He appears to have been an Anglo-Catholic; and his anti-Evangelicalism is fiercely expressed in his characterization of "that darkest of all creeds, which seethes among our Anglo-Saxon dangerous classes"—viz., that "True Religion is a sudden *something to*

[1] *Gravenhurst, or Thoughts on Good and Evil*, 1862, p. 217.
[2] Deriving, however, as far back as John Spencer's *De Legibus Hebræorum*, 1685.
[3] Rev. W. J. Irons, *On the Whole Doctrine of Final Causes*, 1836, App. A.
[4] Above, p. 108, *note*.

happen to us, transferring to us at once the righteousness of the Redeemer and practically excusing us from further anxiety!"[1]

Brougham was further attacked from another side in 'Serious Thoughts generated by perusing Lord Brougham's Discourse of Natural Theology.....By a Student of Realities' (in Five Parts, 1836–9), who gives his portrait but not his name. This critic writes as a pantheist, repelling the title of atheist (pp. 167, 185, 257, 271); but treats Brougham as a mere trimmer who fears to negate openly, and prudentially prefers "to follow in the wake of an archdeacon." The anonymous critic for his own part adopts the motto: "Either blind faith in mysteries or mental conviction from facts; but no more metaphysics," making a vigorous polemic against popular religion as a mere exploitation of fear and ignorance, and demanding a policy of national education which shall diffuse science. Between this attack from a pantheist, and that of Irons, and on the other hand those of the 'Church of England Magazine' and 'Church of England Quarterly,' Brougham was fairly safe.

8. The argument of Irons, again, offered to English Christian theologians in his day no more attraction than had Kant's 'Only Possible Argument for the Demonstration of the Existence of God,' each being subversive of current doctrine. Professing to believe absolutely that "there is Design in Nature," Irons contended that Paley's argument from inferred design to designer is not *as* an argument valid.[2] His own position was that the Aristotelian à priori argument *to* design was sound, but was fundamentally different from the modern argument, which is *from* design to designer. He had apparently realized that the study of Nature might lead to the vision of a designer not recognizable as benevolent. His main motive, however, was presumably resentment at the prestige acquired by mere deists by vindications of the God idea; and he employed with virulence the tactic adopted by Watson against Paine. The result is likely to have been similar. By insisting that free-thinking deists had no standing ground outside revelation the apologists swayed some men away from theism.[3]

That was the theological situation, broadly speaking, at the beginning of the Victorian period. All forms of the design argument were seen by the more thoughtful theologian to conduce rather to simple theism than to any acceptance of a Christology which was as far as possible from representing any conception of rational cosmic order. Such had been the main outcome of the deistic controversy in the previous century; and a "theism" which merely veiled prudentially the unbelief that as "deism" had been aggressive, was for militant churchmen no promising ally. Their natural resort, therefore, was to proclaim that "natural" theism

[1] *The Bible and its Interpreters*, 2nd ed. (n. d.), p. 80. [2] Work cited, p. 116.
[3] Cp. W. M. W. Call, *Final Causes*, 1891, pp. 7–8, and F. Robertson, as there cited,

was not really a logical construction. Here they chimed with the atheist, *tertius gaudens.*

Meantime the average believer, when he reasoned at all, oscillated between the design argument and the impeachment of it as worthless in the absence of revelation. At the close of the century we shall find the philosophically trained men of the churches largely at one in seeking to found on some form of à priori theism, leaving revelation and Christology to shift for themselves in modernized forms. And at the end as at the beginning of the century the main body of religious assent is given in the ratio not of any philosophic reasoning whatever, but of the relative survival of the primitive appetite for religious "comfort" in the forms of prayer, ritual, worship, and the promise of a future life.

9. When British metaphysical philosophy revived with Sir William Hamilton (1788–1856)[1] it was on the lines of a dialectical resistance to the pantheism of Germany, in the interests of faith; though Hamilton's dogmatic views were always doubtful.[2] Admirably learned, and adroit in metaphysical fence, he always grounded his theism, after Kant, on the alleged "needs of our moral nature"—a declaration of philosophical subservience. His substantial service to native philosophy consisted in facing, and bringing to a definite statement, the insoluble conflict between, on the one hand, the theological doctrine of Omniscient Omnipotence, with the parallel philosophical concept or formula of the Unconditioned or Absolute, and, on the other hand, the actual and theological religion which declared the bulk of human action to be contrary to Omnipotent Will, and punishable by the Deity accordingly. There was nothing new in the dilemma, which had been latterly avowed by Paley and Chalmers, and was naturally pressed home by the working freethinkers. Hamilton, unable to solve it, took the course of pleading the moral and emotional necessity of the admittedly anti-philosophic idea of a Personal God; and his school assented. The vital issue was brought to the front after his death, in the Bampton Lectures (1858) of his disciple Dean Mansel; and between them they gave the decisive proof that the orthodox cause had been philosophically lost while being socially won, since their theism emphasized in the strongest way the negative criticism of Kant, leaving deity void of all cognizable qualities.

Hamilton and Mansel alike have received severe treatment at the hands of Mill and others for the calculated irrationalism and the consequent immoralism of their doctrine, which insisted on attributing moral bias to an admittedly Unknowable Absolute, and on standing for Christian mysteries on the sceptical ground that reason is an imperfect instrument, and that our moral faculties and feelings "demand" the

[1] Articles in the *Edinburgh Review* (1829–30); and professorial lectures at Edinburgh (1839–56).

[2] Cp. Veitch's *Memoir*, pp. 195–7, and Rasmussen, *The Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton*, 1925, pp. 37–42, 144.

traditional beliefs. But they did exactly what was needed to force rationalism upon open and able minds. It is indeed astonishing to find so constantly repeated by trained reasoners the old religious blunder of *reasoning* from the *inadequacy* of reason to the need for faith. Kant had in effect followed that tactic in positing a Practical Reason that was to supply the conviction which Pure Reason could not attain to; but he at least maintained the parade of a reasoned procedure. The ordinary disputant says in effect: "Our reason is not to be trusted; let us then on that score decide *by reason* to believe what is handed down to us": for if the argument is not a process of reasoning it is nothing; and if it is to stand, it is an assertion of the validity it denies. Evidently the number of minds capable of such self-stultification is great; but among minds at once honest and competent the number capable of detecting the absurdity must be considerable; and the invariable result of its use down to our own time is to multiply unbelievers in the creed so defended.

On the practical side, the position of the intuitionist is no less hopeless. The claim that the problem is fitly to be solved by an assertion of an emotional need is a surrender of the monotheistic position which is supposed to be safeguarded. For on the plea of spontaneous or irreducible need the theist has left the ground absolutely open for

(*a*) The polytheist, each of whose God-ideas has the same warrant;

(*b*) The Catholic, whose belief in the intercessory powers of Mary and the saints is often the predominant factor in his religious life;

(*c*) The Buddhist, whose "need" is not for God-ideas but for a concept of universal cosmic law; and,

(*d*) The old-style Dualist, whose experience of life has set up in him the vivid concept of a strife of Good and Evil Powers.

(*e*) Finally, the thinker in whom loyalty to truth is an irreducible "need," and who finds in the concept of a Benevolent Omnipotence a mere intellectual imposture, assent to which is a vain hypocrisy, has in addition to his ratiocination exactly the same pseudo-logical and psychological plea for his dismissal of theism as is offered by the theist for his affirmation of a counter-sense.

The neo-theistic position is thus finally a flout not merely to logic but to moral sincerity, as religious dialectic has so commonly been. Men trained to theology are naturally loth to think that a spiritual impulse or gymnastic which has moved them to so much labour can possibly have been a form of intellectual demoralization. But when we note how theologians, after eagerly accepting the metaphysic of Berkeley, the aim and effect of which was to force men, in the interest of faith, from the ground of "experience," have since thrown to the winds all critical analysis in order to ground their cause on "experience" in its most equivocal forms, we are driven to note their moral declension. Their rule, as deduced from their practice, is: "Let us use old meta-

physic where we feel we can baffle unbelief: let us summon the most arbitrary emotionalism to our aid when critical metaphysic dissolves ours." And the tactic is as vain as it is unworthy. Hume turned Berkeley's spear against its wielder; and the irrationalist plea of "experience" will always be turned by reasoners who can competently think.

That Hamilton, like his orthodox predecessors, constructs a series of vital self-contradictions, is dispassionately made more clear by the treatise (1925) of Dr. Rasmussen 'On the Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton' than even by Mill's 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy,' which deals with a mutiplicity of issues. But indeed it had been made sufficiently clear by the convulsive polemic of Hutchison Stirling's 'Sir William Hamilton: being The Philosophy of Perception' in 1865, and by M. P. W. Bolton's *Inquisitio Philosophica* in 1866; and latterly by the comments in Professor W. R. Sorley's *History of English Philosophy*, 1920, p. 240 *sq.* All concur in exhibiting Hamilton's mind as divided against itself. The clue seems to lie in his theology.

He sets forth (*Lectures*, i, 81) maxims and ideals of impartiality, exhorting his hearers to put aside all "blind adhesion to the opinions of our own age and country," and to dismiss "all assumptive beliefs." Yet he has already (p. 5) subsumed a whole theology; and the maxim of non-assumption is actually put in context with a declaration of the truth of Christianity, and a pretence that the command to "become as little children" is identical with the law of philosophic open-mindedness.

When, again, he writes his unhappy essay 'On the Study of Mathematics,' arguing (*Discussions*, ed. 1852, p. 303) that it must be pursued only "*in moderation and efficiently counteracted*," he does not scruple to decry the study itself as inevitably tending to promote atheism (p. 298 *sq.*), taking first the Christian Fathers to witness and proceeding to quote the silliest thing said by Jacobi. It is an odd oversight in Mill's chapter, otherwise so crushing in its rebuttal, not to have noted these outrageous pages. Hamilton, says Mill (5th ed. p. 609), finds hardly anything to say to the disadvantage of mathematics "but things so trite and obvious that the greatest zealot of mathematics could afford to pass them by." The *ad captandum* allegation that mathematicians tend to be atheists is neither trite nor obvious, but, coming from the author of the *Lectures on Metaphysics*, is an intellectual humiliation.

These and many other self-stultifications prove in the first place that Hamilton's mind suffered like those of his predecessors and contemporaries from the paralysing power of inculcated dogma and social pressure. Hamilton probably never forgot that when he applied for the Chair of Philosophy at Edinburgh, "it was even

insinuated, though not boldly asserted, that he was an infidel..... He was a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*;.....were there not articles there which were not only not orthodox, but not Christian?" (Veitch, *Memoir*, p. 195). A professor so suspected had need colour his lectures adequately with Christian protestation.

But the diagnosis of Hamilton must register in his case a special disharmony of faculty. He lived more in his learning, which was so great as to give him a unique reputation on that score alone, than in his ratiocination; and his entire lack of discipline in mathematics is as likely to be a consequence as a cause of his signal discontinuity of thought. It is one of the ironies of culture history that he, who distinguished himself by the animus with which he aspersed phrenology, may ultimately be understood and charitably explained in terms of its diagnosis. Considered as a unitary intelligence, chargeable with gross self-contradiction in his chosen field of philosophy, he would figure as devoid of intellectual rectitude. Considered as a brain in which vigorous faculties were ill aggregated, he is an interesting psychological case. Apart from more personal motives, he rejected phrenology because it would not lend itself to the crude formula of man's "free-will," upon which he staked alike his ethics and his theology. Applied to his case, it may, to the eye of common sense, save his character. The alternative solution is that inculcated creed had paralysed his faculty on the side of intellectual ethic.

10. Henry Longueville Mansel[1] (1820–71), Hamilton's disciple, was as thoroughly committed in advance to theology as he. His every philosophic argument is conducted or inhibited with an eye to the salving of the creed of his Church. The argument from the impotence of reason before the problems of Infinity is turned by him not to the honest acknowledgment of the futility of any theology of the universe, but to the medieval end of exhorting us to believe what we are told by tradition. He might well praise Newman, though he had not read him;[2] for his position is fundamentally just Newman's, and he might as fitly as Newman have joined the Church of Rome.

After justly claiming to have exposed the "tissue of fallacies" which forms the basis of Kant's ethical philosophy, and shown that the later German philosophers equally leave no footing for the Christian creed of Providence and theistic ethics, his own prescription[3] is "to rest humbly on the conviction of faith," a procedure exactly on all fours, as to logic, with that of Kant which he had been demolishing, and even more humilia-

[1] Mansel took a double first in 1843; became Waynflete professor in 1859; professor of ecclesiastical history (after Stanley) in 1867; and Dean of St. Paul's in 1868.

[2] Pref. to 4th ed. of Bampton Lectures, p. xxxviii.

[3] *Lecture on the Philosophy of Kant*, 1856, pp. 32–42. (Rep. in Mansel's *Letters, Lectures, and Reviews*, 1873, pp. 178–85.)

ting to philosophy. As he avows in so many words in the Bampton Lectures on 'The Limits of Religious Thought,'[1] all religions are thus on a level, and there is no reason for believing one more than another. The tactic, accordingly, recoiled on itself.

The outstanding result, in Hamilton's case as in Kant's, of the attempt to bring to a logical issue the problems set up for reason by the current religion, was a startling revelation of the triviality of the footing left. Of both, as of Newman, it may be said that all their solemn discourse of God, on scrutiny, left for reason a *caput mortuum.* J. A. Froude has eloquently told of the profound impression made on an audience of Oxford undergraduates by Newman when, after a recital of "some of the incidents of our Lord's passion," he proceeded "in a low clear voice," heard in the furthest corner of the chapel, to say: "Now I bid you recollect that He to whom these things were done was Almighty God."[2] Froude alleges that the tremendous impression thus made "was an epoch in the mental history of *more than one* of my Oxford contemporaries."

For the later reader it tells what children undergraduates can be, and how little rational thinking underlay Froude's own rhetorical theism. Minds which could see "Almighty God" in one crucified victim, without asking how Almighty God operated through the executioners, were hardly qualified to face ultimate philosophic issues. The due answer came from Disraeli, as champion of "the holy race."

But Hamilton and Mansel, who were officially committed to endorsing Newman if the issue had been put to them, were as anti-rational as he in their ultimate thinking. Both declared that everything must give way to an alleged "need" in "our" natures, the said need involving the fulmination of a "freedom of the will" which, strictly meaningless in respect of its incongruous terms, was categorically negated in its accepted sense by the terms "Almighty God." If God be Almighty, he controls all action and all choice. Mansel appears actually to have believed that this "psychological" axiom was an original contribution by Hamilton to philosophy,[3] and that the debate was ended by the assertion of the "need" of belief in a proposition which is a contradiction in terms.

A philosophy thus summarized lays its head on the block for decapitation by every man who can testify that, having thought out the problem to the point reached, and having an irreducible "need" for truth, he has no such contrary "need" as is alleged, but proceeds to adjust his life by rational consideration of human interests. Previous generations of churchmen, blusterously ignoring the facts of ancient history, would have disposed of such a declaration by the sacrosanct formula, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," thus crediting an extremely improbable plurality to the atheists. But when men of at least no less capacity, and

[1] *Id.* p. 42.

[2] *Short Studies*, iv, 286.

[3] See *The Philosophy of the Conditioned*, 1866, p. 34 *sq.* Hamilton did but formulate anew the ethical doctrine of Kant. But the concept of "need" is as old as the Psalms.

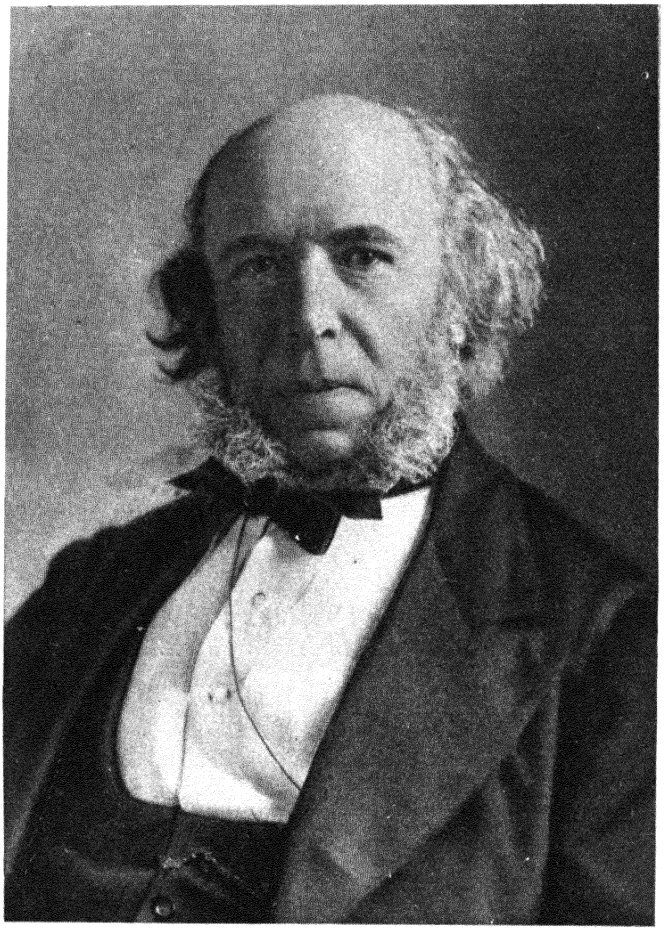
certainly of greater intellectual courage and candour, than the bemused champions of theism, either explicitly or implicitly took up the non-theistic position, the method of brow-beating began to lose even apparent efficacy.

When polemists like Mansel had to protest that German philosophy had attained in the hands of Hegel only to a pantheism which came to the same thing as atheism ;[1] when competent students saw in Comte and John Stuart Mill reasoners who were at least as capable as their own instructors, and who yet either explicitly dismissed theism as an obsolete formulation or so handled questions of logic as to leave it no footing whatever ; when they found in Spencer a thinker outgoing in depth of analysis and breadth of synthesis all previous writers on psychology, yet about as completely delivered from theistic assumptions as these others, the attitude of contemptuous dismissal or moral indignation towards reasoned atheism became out-of-date even for undergraduates.

11. Believers of a reasoning habit were quick to see that the strategy of Mansel not only created a grave dilemma for them but, on the other side, played into the hands of an ecclesiasticism which repudiated all reason and claimed unconditional obedience to authority. Goldwin Smith, then substantially or at least forensically orthodox, struck out powerfully on both heads.[2] Mansel's philosophy, he argued, by denying that even the highest human morality was identical with, or capable of measuring, "the Absolute Morality of God," had in effect negated the morality of God, leaving an immorality in its place. "Morality and truth are gone, and God hardly remains." No wonder, then, that "materialists should have received these lectures with approbation, as well as Bishops." "Nothing is left but the bare, hard text of Scripture, as a brazen regulator thrust into the world by an almighty Power."

Mansel hotly replied, protesting alike against the argument from consequences and the suggestion of priestcraft, and claiming that his character had been attacked. In a work of extremely able dialectic,[3] Smith answered all along the line, exposing "the Nemesis of Orthodoxy which has borrowed weapons from Rationalism to destroy Rational Religion." The "atheistic" consequences of the Hamilton-Mansel position are unanswerably set forth, with the reminder that the position had been found rather too atheistic by the atheistic Spencer. Only a "happy contradiction" between his piety and his philosophy was ascribed to Mansel. But when Smith seeks to affirm his own "rational religion," which was but deism with a non-dogmatic Christianity super-added, he in turn achieves only a philosophical nullity. The dilemma which had driven Mansel to temporize is merely evaded. Between the two, theism is philosophically cancelled.

[1] *Lecture on the Philosophy of Kant*, p. 40.
[2] Postscript to *Lectures on the Study of History*, 1859.
[3] *Rational Religion, and the Rationalistic Objections of the Bampton Lectures for 1858.* Oxford, 1861.



Herbert Spencer
when 73

HERBERT SPENCER

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There is, however, another side of the matter. It is difficult to free Mansel from the charge of seeking to confuse and bewilder; but mere contact with the processes of reasoning in his Bampton Lectures is almost refreshing after much acquaintance with the see-saw of vituperation and platitude which up to that time mostly passed muster for defence of religion in nineteenth-century England. Personally, he seems to have been more in earnest in a fierce resistance to university reform[1] than in any religious or philosophic doctrine; but he builded better than he knew. He made for a revival of intellectual life. And he suffered enough at the hands of his co-religionists, including F. D. Maurice, to set up something like compassion in the mind of the retrospective rationalist. Accused of having adopted "the absolute and infinite, as defined after the leaders of German metaphysics," as a "synonym for the true and living God," he protested that he had done "exactly the reverse. I assert that the absolute and infinite, as defined in the German metaphysics, *and in all other metaphysics with which I am acquainted*, is a notion which destroys itself by its own contradictions. I believe *also* that God is, in some manner incomprehensible by me, both absolute and infinite; and that those attributes exist in Him *without any repugnance or contradiction at all.* Hence I maintain throughout that *the infinite of philosophy is not the true infinite.*"[2] Charged further with borrowing without acknowledgment from Newman, the Dean was reduced to crediting Newman with "transcendent gifts" while claiming to have read almost nothing by him, and winding up with a quotation from Newman inviting men to seek solace from the sense of nescience in blind belief.

12. It was said of Hamilton that, "having scratched his eyes out in the bush of reason, he scratched them in again in the bush of faith"; and when that could obviously be said also of his Oxford disciple, the philosophic tide was clearly on the turn. Within two years of the delivery of Mansel's lectures his and Hamilton's philosophic positions were being confidently employed as an open and avowed basis for the naturalistic 'First Principles' (1860–2) of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), wherein, with an unfortunate laxity of metaphysic on the author's own part, and a no less unfortunate lack of consistency as regards the criticism of religious and anti-religious positions, the new cosmic conceptions are unified in a masterly conception of evolution as a universal law. Yet in positing an "Unknowable" of which we have "consciousness" he was quasi-theistic where Hamilton, on one line of his reasoning, had been in effect absolutely agnostic.

[1] See his laboriously amusing skit, the *Phrontisterion*, thought worthy of reprinting by his executors with his *Letters, Lectures, and Reviews* (1873); and cp. Benn, *Hist. of Rationalism*, ii, 100.

[2] Bampton Lectures, 4th ed. pref. p. xxxvi, *note.* After thus declaring all metaphysics to be profoundly delusive, Mansel shows at his worst (*Philosophy of the Conditioned*, 1866, p. 188) by disparaging Mill as an incompetent metaphysician.

Spencer has avowed in his *Autobiography* (ii, 75) what might be surmised by critical readers, that he wrote the First Part of *First Principles* in order to guard against the charge of "materialism." This motive led him to misrepresent "atheism," which he quite untruly described as a profession to explain the universe, and there was a touch of retribution in the general disregard of his disavowal of materialism, at which he expresses surprise. The broad fact remains that for prudential reasons he set forth at the very outset of his system a set of conclusions which could properly be reached only at the end, if at all. Either he was himself professing to explain the universe, in a treatise which pronounced it inexplicable, or he was not. If not, the charge against atheists, made in disregard of all their protestations, was disingenuous.

In Spencer's case, with a difference, we see the conditioning effect of a great surrounding body of blind belief on the effort to think newly. The official thinker, we have seen, is swayed to evasion; but even the freelance runs the risk of being cowed into a semblance of conformity. As late as 1861, in his powerful and influential treatise on Education, we find Spencer writing of "that grand epic written by the finger of God upon the strata of the earth," and arguing that whoever forbids play to children "forbids the divinely appointed means to physical development."[1] Before such a pronounced attempt to "explain the universe" in the most conventional fashion, we must infer deliberate "accommodation" to popular opinion, after the explicitly non-theistic procedure at the outset of *First Principles*.

The matter is put beyond doubt by his authorized biographer. In his first book, the *Social Statics* (1851), he had similarly used "the ordinary language of theology," and even then he had ceased to think deistically. "Knowing his religious opinions," his father "could not understand" his resort to such modes of expression; and to his father's comment he answered: "I have always felt some difficulty, but have concluded that the usual expressions were as good as any others. Some words to signify the ultimate essence, or principle or cause of things, I was obliged to use, and thinking the current ones as good as any others, I thought best to use them rather than cause any needless opposition."[2] And if there be any thought of censuring him for the accommodation, let it be remembered that in 1845 his private avowal of disregard for all Christian dogma led to the renunciation of his friendship by one who had greatly valued it.[3] The odd thing is that in *The Study of Sociology*[4] we find him satirizing the conventional theism which talks of "The Great Artificer," "The Master Builder," and "the hand of the

[1] *Education*, small ed. pp. 11, 135.
[2] *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, by Dr. David Duncan, ed. 1911, p. 60.
[3] *Autobiography*, i, 275–6.
[4] Ed. 1873, pp. 29, 33, 298.

Almighty"—phrases on all fours with his own of a dozen years before, never deleted or apologized for by him.

The kind of pressure that led to such compromises is further illustrated by the fact that on the appearance of Spencer's 'Principles of Psychology' in 1855[1] it was discussed in the Unitarian *National Review* (in an article which Spencer ascribes to R. H. Hutton but which was really written by the friendly critic J. D. Morell[2]) under the heading of 'Modern Atheism.' A review so entitled, as Spencer observes, "was of course damaging; and the more so because it gave the cue to some other reviewers." Yet Spencer had not in that work even discussed the question of theism: he had merely explored psychology in a strictly scientific spirit, and was ostensibly a theist at the time of writing. Having regard to the fact that such a book had at best a poor chance of being read, and could hardly be expected to pay its expenses,[3] the author was under a lamentably strong temptation to avert pious hostility by conformist phrases.

It remains true, however, that the 'First Principles,' produced under these vitiating pressures, renders a service to rational thought quite beyond the capacity of most of Spencer's metaphysical critics, who have as a rule belonged to the academic class which in his day was deeply engaged in the conspiracy to bring all critical thought under odium. Strictly, the book is a "System of Nature" rather than a philosophy in the sense of a study of the grounds and limitations of knowledge; that is to say, it is on the former ground alone that it is coherent and original. But its very imperfections on the other side have probably promoted its reception among minds already shaken in theology by the progress of concrete science; while at the same time such imperfections give a hostile foothold to the revived forms of theism. In any case, the "agnostic" foundation supplied by the despairing dialectic of Hamilton and Mansel has always constituted an effective part of the Spencerian case.

That there are elements of philosophic theism[4] and pantheism in the 'Principles' is not to be disputed, that being the normal mode of transition from a theistic to a non-theistic view of the universe; and Spencer has been abundantly criticized on his own side, so to speak, over his employment of the expression "The Unknowable," which has such an ineradicable stamp of hypostasis.[5] It was his calculated substitution for "The Infinite" and "The Absolute" of the theists, and it comes under

[1] Second ed. in 2 vols., 1870–2.

[2] Cp. *Autobiography*, i, 469–70; *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, ii, 287.

[3] *Autobiography*, p. 463.

[4] E.g., the proposition that the destructive processes of Nature are really "beneficent" to man (§ 33, p. 120).

[5] Possibly it was suggested by Hamilton's dictum (*Discussions*, p. 15 *n.*) that "the last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar—Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ—'*To the unknown and unknowable God.*'" But, as has been above noted, William Smith had posited "*the* Unknowable" about the same time. And Voltaire put the idea.

the practical objection incurred by these, that the verbal erection into an entity of something unconceived and inconceivable yet declared to be the subject of a "positive consciousness"[1] is an idle exercise. But at least there lies against Spencer no such charge of double-dealing as is laid against the philosophers of the Absolute. He certainly made a fundamentally fallacious attempt to show that Religion and Science are alike bottomed on the recognition of the unknowableness of the universe, but after 1861 he had no further dealings with obscurantism.

That would-be compromise itself, indeed, is an instance of the vitiation of thought by deference to outside prejudice. Like the deistic phraseology in *Education* it is to be understood as motived by possibly sub-conscious fear of the charge of atheism. Nothing less could well account for Spencer's use of the phrase "the atheistic hypothesis" to describe a position which is simply a rejection of the theistic hypothesis in all its thousand forms. And possibly Spencer's avowed non-experience of any of the normal religious emotions[2] may have made possible for him the strange view of historic Religion which, while defining it quite otherwise, takes it to be a state of blank recognition of mystery. In a country where it meant a mass of definite dogmas, the assumption is surprising enough. Yet it seems to have conciliated many theists while it scandalized Christians. And when we note Huxley's emphatic repudiation of "The Unknowable" as a "hocus-pocus," we are reminded that Huxley, seeking election to the first London School Board, had previously provided the defenders of the faith with a concrete panegyric of the Bible as a schoolbook, such as Spencer would never have countenanced.

Mr. Benn has authoritatively characterized the theism of the first edition of Cassels's *Supernatural Religion* as "in a form at once more meagre and more clumsy the same blend of theism, pantheism, and agnosticism that infests the introduction to *First Principles*, only with the theistic element brought out in bolder relief" (*Hist. of Rationalism*, ii, 365). This seems hard measure on both—especially seeing that Cassels finally abandoned his theism—when we recognize that, partly by Mr. Benn's own showing, very much the same judgment must be passed on all the constructive philosophers of the century. It is quite true that such a formula as "the manifestation of an Unknowable Power" is "overtly self-contradictory" (p. 225). But Mr. Benn does not note, I think, that the same characterization holds good of the still current conventional formula: "We know *only* phenomena," with the implicit claim that we know *of* the existence of Noumena which we do *not* know. The rectification of Spencer's metaphysic will involve the discounting of much more pretentious metaphysics than his.

When, further, Mr. Benn writes (p. 400) that Professor William

[1] § 26, p. 92.

[2] See Hector Macpherson's *Herbert Spencer*, 1900, p. 9.

Wallace's position, like Spencer's, "includes the *impracticable* suggestion of something higher than *personality* as an attribute of the Absolute Being," he does not exactly indicate the nature and the bearing of Spencer's words. The passage in view runs: "Is it not just possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending Intelligence and Will, as these transcend mechanical motion?" (*First Principles*, § 31). This is really a valid estoppel to the thinkers who, having decided that mind is the highest thing on earth, decide at the same moment that it must be the highest thing in the universe. It is truly a childish inference, yet it is constantly drawn. And in putting sharply the reminder that mind is merely an anthropomorphic mode, Spencer was doing something to save the real agnosticism of his system.

But there is no disputing the criticism—long ago made for themselves by many "Spencerians"—that Spencer's metaphysical logic is made incoherent and fallacious by his purpose of effecting his futile "reconciliation" between Religion and Science—a process in which "Religion" becomes an idle abstraction denuded of all connection with any given religion, and "Science" is represented by the simple avowal that beyond a certain metaphysical point Science cannot go. The self-stultification is again and again concrete: "a religious creed is definable as an à priori theory of the universe" (§ 14); "the beliefs which Science has *forced upon* religion have been intrinsically *more religious* than those which they supplanted" (§ 29, p. 104). Thus Religion had *not* been what was asserted of it, and had been actually concussed by science, and either there was no remaining antagonism to reconcile, or the reconciliation consists in the annihilation of religion as something conflicting with science.

In the 'Principles of Biology' (1864; revised ed. 1898), while making a signal contribution to the co-ordination of a science of which he had little first-hand knowledge, Spencer committed another philosophic miscarriage, of which his opponents have taken advantage. His successive attempts at an abstract definition of life show him groping after a concept which should somehow "explain" life as a totality. Later, in another connection, he could realize that the only possible "explaining" of cosmic phenomena is just the notation of their sequences; but here he implies that because "the processes which go on in living things are incomprehensible as results of any physical action known to us," life is somehow more of a "mystery" than inorganic phenomena. In point of fact, as the physicists have often avowed, and as Hume and others before him had argued, physical sequences are not any *more* to be "explained" than vital or psychic sequences. They are simply to be traced as invariably happening under certain conditions.

Placed alongside of the previous general formula that all cosmic phenomena are to be "interpreted" in terms of Matter, Motion, and

Force, the new avowal gave occasion for the claim that the "formula" of evolution had broken down.[1] At the same time the critics admit that the *Biology* had newly and effectively shown the action of evolution in "life"—that being the controlling idea of the treatise. If then the formula failed, it followed simply that the formula should be altered, in terms of the true recognition that the task of science is to face a Going Cosmos, and to note as well as may be all its sequences.

Negatively, Spencer had done this emphatically enough. His vehemently just dismissal of the empty myth of special creation[2] left nothing to be desired. What should have been added, for philosophy, was the clear avowal that alike the inorganic and the organic sequences of the known cosmos are to be recognized merely *as* traceable sequences, to be co-ordinated as far as possible, with no pretence of less or more "mystery" in any department. The particularism which specifies mystery in the organic, as if the study of the inorganic were all plain sailing, is invariably turned to the account of the mysteriolatry which pretends to find solutions either in traditionary myths or in new auto-suggestion. Spencer's great service to science and thought would have been greater had he been less intent on finding separate "unknowables" in his total "Unknowable."

13. The large acceptance of Spencer's "system of nature" as a whole was prepared for and promoted by the great influence, previously attained and then expanding, of the essential "naturalism" of John Stuart Mill's 'System of Logic' (1843). Without any discussion of religious issues, that treatise from the first created among students a zeal not merely for the formalities of logic but for searching thought on all real issues. The constant reference to scientific results, as giving the working tests for reasoning, told strongly in favour of the scientific as against the theological habit. When his larger treatises on Logic and Economics were followed by his shorter works *On Liberty* (1859) and on various political problems, he became at once the most popular and the most influential of the serious writers of his age, as distinct from the historians.

It was not till the posthumous issue of his Autobiography and his 'Three Essays on Religion' (1874) that many of his readers realized how complete was his alienation from the current religion, from his childhood up. In his stringent 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy' (1865), indeed, he had indignantly repudiated the worship of an unintelligibly good God; but he had there seemed to take for granted the God-idea; and save in inconclusive passages in the *Liberty* he had indicated no rejection of Christianity. But though the *Liberty* was praised by Kingsley and contemned by Carlyle, it made for freethinking no less than for tolerance; and his whole life's work made for reason. "The

[1] E.g. Prof. J. Arthur Thomson's *Herbert Spencer*, 1906, p. 109.
[2] *Principles of Biology*, 1864, vol. i, §§ 109–15.

saint of rationalism" was Gladstone's[1] account of him as a parliamentarian. His posthumous presentment to the world of the Voltairean idea of a limited-liability God, the victim of circumstances—a theorem which meets neither the demand for a theistic explanation of the universe nor the worshipper's craving for support—sets up some wonder as to his philosophy; but it was probably as disintegrative of orthodoxy as a more philosophical performance would have been.

Before the appearance of Mill's posthumous 'Three Essays,' W. R. Greg, the author of 'The Creed of Christendom,' had in the preface to his volume of collected essays entitled 'Enigmas of Life' (1872; 17th ed. 1889) strenuously denied that omnipotence should be ascribed to Deity. Half the difficulties of theism, he argued, "are wholly gratuitous, and arise out of the inconsiderate and unwarranted use of a single word—*omnipotent*." He appears to have regarded himself as the first to argue on theistic lines against the use of the term, though the idea is explicit in Voltaire (*Dict. Philos.*, art. PUISSANCE).

The surprising thing is that neither Greg nor Mill faces the rejoinder that a God *not* omnipotent cannot be theologically pretended to supply the explanation of the universe which theism seeks and claims to find. A Limited Power, on the face of the case, is a phenomenon which calls for a further inquiry equally with the total conception of the Cosmos; and theism, to be even formally consistent, would have to seek for a Higher God who had created the Limited God. (Such is the implication in Mr. H. G. Wells's *God the Invisible King*, where a "Veiled Being" is superimposed.) The Limited God will not even ostensibly fit the concept of "First Cause," since the proposition implies a Cause behind. The new theorem thus satisfied neither Theists nor the opponents of Christian Theism.

It was by his 'Utilitarianism'[2] (1861), which at first appeared as a series of articles in *Fraser's Magazine*, that Mill exerted, during his lifetime, his most direct influence for rationalism. The book is ill-planned and imperfectly thought, dealing as it does in a popular fashion with some of the central dilemmas of ethical philosophy, and it has always given nearly as much intellectual dissatisfaction to competent Utilitarians as it offered opportunity of cavil to opponents.[3] But it had a lasting effect on current religious thought in Britain, were it only by stimulating inquiry into the religious view and rule of conduct. Bentham had wrought out a working conception of Utility as the moral test of conduct, which had much influence on jurists and open-minded students; but Mill forced it on general attention, with an inevitably disintegrating effect on orthodox belief.

[1] Letter in W. L. Courtney's *J. S. Mill*, 1889, p. 142.
[2] Written in 1854. Revised in 1860. Bain, p. 112. [3] Cp. Bain, p. 112 *sq.*

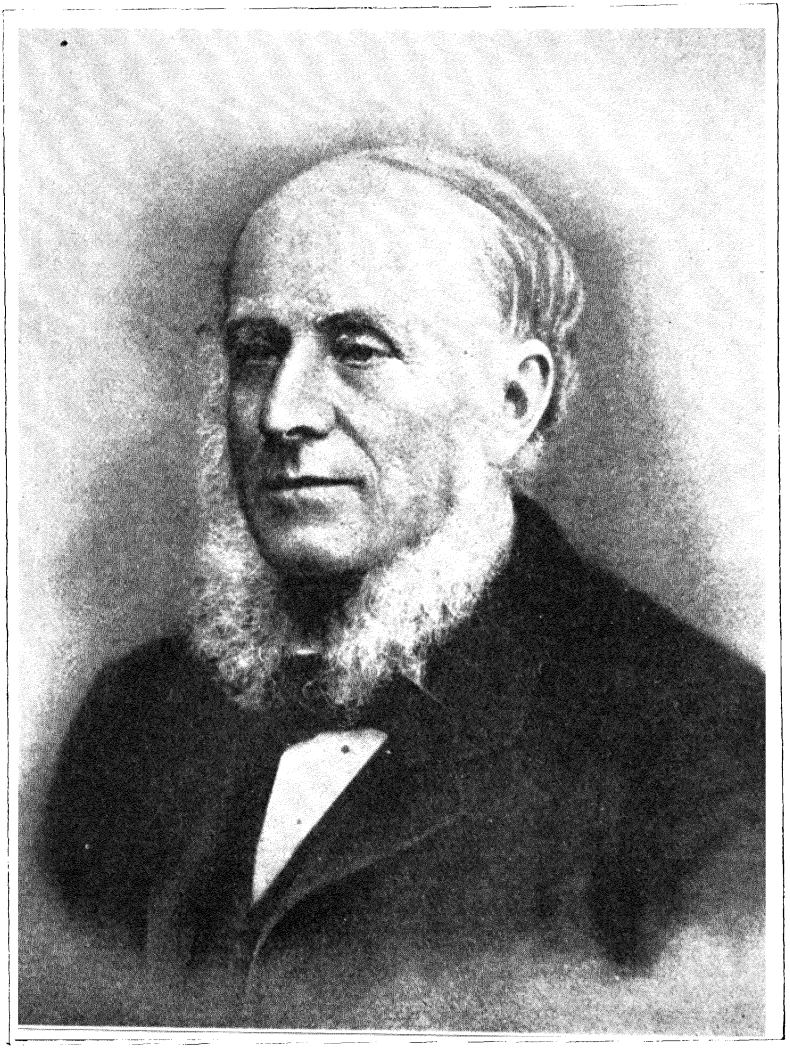
An ambiguous allusion to Christianity[1] as "intended and fitted" to enable men to find the right for themselves; and the statement that "in the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility,"[2] were rather perturbing than comforting to faith; and the dismissals of the idea of a divinely implanted moral faculty,[3] and of the necessity of the notion of Providence to morals[4] were all definitely antagonistic to the current creed. Coming into action after 'The Origin of Species' and Spencer's 'First Principles,' the book reinforced the thrust towards a naturalistic conception of all life, far exceeding in scope anything effected by such early scientific philosophy as that of William Smith. Mill's book on Hamilton, a more expert performance than his *Utilitarianism*, carried the warfare inside that section of the orthodox philosophic camp which had the highest repute; and on that side too the balance of intellectual prestige rapidly shifted.

The disconcerting effect of Mill's attack on Hamilton necessarily elicited a number of rejoinders, some of which indicated errors and oversights in the *Examination;* but of Hamilton's main philosophico-religious positions, as set forth and maintained by Mansel, no defence was possible save by way of metaphysical chicane; and that procedure was independently refuted by M. P. A. Bolton's[5] '*Inquisitio Philosophica*: an Examination of the Principles of Kant and Hamilton' in the following year, in so far as it was not accomplished by Mill in his third edition. Bolton's work, which closely sifts Hamilton's treatment of Kant, and shows him to have known Kant very imperfectly, is perhaps the most competent work of philosophical criticism produced in England in that generation. That it excited little attention is probably due to the fact that it is strictly negative, reducing all the quasi-theological philosophic positions of Kant and Hamilton to futility without stating the conclusion that religious philosophy has collapsed. But so far as it was read it must have strengthened greatly that conviction, now becoming more and more common.

14. The re-orientation had been furthered by the earlier work of Alexander Bain (1818–1903), the friend and biographer of the two Mills, who marked a path of scientific psychology in 'The Senses and the Intellect' (1855) and 'The Emotions and the Will' (1859). In 1860 he was appointed to the chair of Logic in the university of Aberdeen, his native town, and, his rationalistic attitude being well known, was at first met in the class-room by systematic hostility and disorder, his small stature encouraging the mutineers. He met it all with calmness and firm discipline, fining the ringleaders, till after a few weeks they subsided; and ere long Bain became one of the most influential professors in Britain, training on scientific lines a whole generation of students, who held him

[1] 7th ed. p. 32. [2] P. 24. [3] P. 63. [4] P. 49.

[5] Not noted in *D. N. B.* He had previously produced *An Examination of the Principles of the Scoto-Oxonian Philosophy.* Neither work is named in Professor Sorley's *History of English Philosophy.*



ALEXANDER BAIN

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in the highest esteem. In 1868 he produced his 'Mental and Moral Science,' well fitted to be the text-book of the new generation. His calm temperament and methodical habit yielded the kind of teaching that could best give his views an academic footing. In his collected *Practical Essays* (1884) he has repeatedly indicated his knowledge of the restraint imposed on freethought alike by social and academic convention. Resigning his chair in 1881, he was elected Rector of his University, though sufficiently well known to be in active sympathy with militant freethought. In his will, he vetoed a religious service at his funeral.

15. When Grote, already a recipient of academic honours for his great work as the historian of Greece, produced in 1865 his survey of 'Plato and the other Companions of Sokrates' (4 vols.) the heterodox school made a fairly good front. But it was with Spencer's 'Data of Ethics' (1879) that its naturalistic tendencies became systematically pronounced in the field of moral philosophy. The book was an instalment of the 'Synthetic Philosophy' produced in advance of its due place, the author fearing he might not live to complete the 'Principles of Morality' which he had always planned as the copestone of his edifice. To judge from the preface, he would appear to have thought that no scientific ethic had yet been formulated; and in his self-absorption he has no mention for any predecessor save Bentham. As in the *First Principles*, he is careful to credit religion with valuable elements; and no candid reader could doubt the intense moral earnestness of the whole performance. As Spencer had foreseen, however, it was bitterly and unscrupulously attacked, the most unexpected assailant being the erratic Goldwin Smith, who at this time was on one of the reactionary tacks of his zig-zag course. He fared ill in the fray which followed; and Spencer's treatise (afterwards embodied in the *Principles of Justice*) took its place as a standard ethical system, with all the honours of chronic orthodox bombardment. Its merits and defects will be separately considered in our chapter on "The Doctrine of Evolution," in relation to the development of that concept.

A somewhat unpleasing aspect of the case is Spencer's eagerness to disparage previous work in ethics in respect of its lying outside the evolutionary concept. One of his exponents, approving his attitude, writes that "Primitive man was not, as the Utilitarians assumed, a reasoning and calculating animal" (Hector Macpherson, in *Herbert Spencer*, 1900, p. 168). This is shortsighted championship. Primitive man *was* a reasoning and calculating animal, albeit reasoning and calculating ill. If he were not, the theorem of evolution would break down once for all. Spencer himself had expressly insisted (*Principles of Sociology*, i, § 52) that "primitive ideas are natural, and, under the conditions in which they occur, rational..... Given the data as known to him, the primitive man's inference is the reasonable inference." That moral "intuitions" have been

evolved under social pressure, which is Spencer's point—put as if it told *against* "the Utilitarians"—is clear; but this view had been quite definitely put by William Smith in 1839, long before Spencer. A greater readiness to recognize the value of the labours of his predecessors would have improved the ethical savour of Spencer's own work. But we have finally to recognize that the abnormal driving force which was needed to produce the 'Synthetic Philosophy' under the immense difficulties of the situation was hardly compatible with a concern for acknowledging the services of others.

16. Before the issue of Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, but in the same fruitful decade, there had appeared (1877) the *Natural Law* of Edith Simcox, the work of a rationalist who somewhat sharply challenged his doctrine of "The Unknowable," but entirely adhered to the evolutionary and scientific view of the ethical problem. Little discussed in comparison with Spencer's and other ethical treatises, it goes perhaps as deeply as any into the fundamental problems, and is of permanent value to the student. It is, besides, particularly well written, making a kind of appeal to the literary sense that Spencer does not make. The positions of rational ethics were being thus well "dug in" before the last notable reaction of the supernaturalist school, already much affected by criticism, set up a current of chastened pietism in English academic life.

17. When the work of Mill and the openings of Spencer were followed up in the eighth decade by a manifold critical output of all kinds, greatly in excess of anything before seen above the surface, the withdrawal of support from theistic philosophy became so marked that Thomas Hill Green, writing in or before 1880, begins his *Prolegomena to Ethics* with an avowal that "all around him" are "the multitude of the educated who have wearied of the formulas of a stereotyped theology," and who, while equally recognizing the illusory character of religion as put in poetic form, prefer that to "a philosophy which is itself not only an illusion but a dull and pretentious one, with no interest for the imagination and no power over the heart." Green's own work was held for a time, by its many sympathetic readers, and in particular by the students and friends whom his fine personality so strongly impressed, to have succeeded in re-establishing theistic philosophy on new and deeper foundations. But that enthusiasm too has died down. The Green philosophy has had on the whole a shorter vogue than had the Hegelian, upon which Green proceeded.

What properly concerns us here is its failure, equally with the Hegelian, to support Christian theism, any more than the Christian system. It is quite definitely pantheistic, wholly excluding alike the doctrine of salvation and those of heaven and hell.[1] As to his attitude on gospel history, we learn from his sympathetic biographer that he

[1] Cp. the author's *Letters on Reasoning*, 2nd ed. pp. 198–212.

entirely rejected "the dogmas relating to the person of Christ,"[1] being in fact at a pantheistic or Neo-Unitarian standpoint. Of the historic problem, again, he made no scientific or scholarly study. "He deprecated the attempt to reconstruct from uncertain documents the precise details of [Jesus'] teaching and character, contenting himself with gathering their most salient features from such sources as the Sermon on the Mount"—that is, from sources which many contemporary scholars had recognized to be mere compilations from Hebrew literature, canonical and uncanonical. Thus the most distinguished academic philosopher in the England of the last quarter of the nineteenth century was not only not a "believing Christian" but was quite unscientific in his view of the origination of the Christian creed. And Green's official course of urging, on students who did not believe in Christianity, attendance at prayers and religious services, has only served in the sequel to weaken his own prestige as a specially sincere thinker and teacher.[2] Tampering with the spirit of veracity is a poor vindication of the claim to have produced an ideal ethic.

Of his moral earnestness as an ethical thinker, on the other hand, there was never any question. What concerns us here is (1) the substantial compatibility of all his ideals, and even of much of his reasoning, with a strictly rationalistic outlook on moral problems, and (2) his complete failure to show that either theism or pantheism is fundamental to moral aspiration. His rhetoric about the needs of the imagination and the heart, accordingly, belongs to the method of the rhapsode, and is rather an impeachment than a certificate of his philosophic integrity. Though the tactic is still far from obsolete, it is decaying under the contempt of men who do not regard their moral emotions as autobiographical facts to be brandished in the place of the weapons of argument. Green's tactic was in fact defeated in advance by Clifford, whom he did not attempt to confute, and who outwent him in forthright sincerity.

[1] R. L. Nettleship, *Memoir of Thomas Hill Green*, 1906, p 153. Mrs. Humphry Ward told Gladstone that the words of Grey in her *Robert Elsmere*, "The parting with the Christian mythology is the rending asunder of bones and marrow," were words of Green's to her (*Life*, by Mrs. Trevelyan, 1923, p. 63).

[2] See *Letters on Reasoning*, as cited.

PART II

THE GENERAL ADVANCE

CHAPTER IX

BRITISH AND AMERICAN WRITERS: 1840–70

THUS far we have traced, on the one hand, a special reaction against all freethinking, set up by the French Revolution and persisting or recurring as against new freethought, which, on the other hand, has been traced in (*a*) the play of popular and non-popular propaganda in Britain and America; (*b*) the earlier indications of freethinking in English and American literature; (*c*) the resurgence of the natural sciences, primarily in France; (*d*) the progress of scholarly Biblical criticism, primarily in Germany; and (*e*) the revision of philosophy and ethics in all four countries, notably on the stimuli of the German movement from Kant to Hegel, and of the return to practical reform in English jurisprudence and correlative political theory. We have now to follow for a generation the apparent outcome of all these factors in (1) the significant treatises in English which bring to bear a direct criticism on religion for the general reader, (2) the aspect of literature in Europe and America, and (3) the social result as embodied in organized movements.

1. One of the surprises of the progress in the United States is the emergence of new forms of pantheism. We have seen there a "Universalist" minister[1] debating with the elder Owen in 1829; and may note that a preacher of that body, Elhanan Winchester, was concerned in the setting up of the congregation at South Place, London,[2] which was to evolve in the third generation into a place of creedless inquiry. To the same sect belonged, in America, Abner Kneeland, who had started as a Baptist, but, after publishing 'A Review of the Evidences of Christianity' in 1829, set up in 1831 the *Boston Investigator*,[3] the oldest Freethought journal. Having turned pantheist, he was in 1833 indicted and tried for blasphemy on the score that he had declared he "did not believe in the

[1] As to this body Newman mentions in 1845 (*Essay on Development*, 2nd ed. p. 41) that it had "at least 550 churches." Their doctrine was that salvation was to be ultimately universal for all, punishment being temporary.

[2] *Centenary History of South Place Chapel*, by Moncure Conway, 1894, pp. 1–10.

[3] On which Frances Wright served for a time as associate editor.

God of the Universalists"; and was sentenced, after appeal, to two months' imprisonment. Thereafter, leaving his journal in other hands, he retired to farming, dying in 1844, and leaving for posthumous publication an annotated edition of Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary.

The outlook was evidently not favourable to pantheism; but in the next decade it re-arose in the form of a polemic at once scholarly and popular against the orthodox Unitarianism which stood for advanced religion at Boston. In that cultured region there must have been some response to the stirring lectures of Frances Wright and the debates carried on by the two Owens in the 'twenties and 'thirties; but Priestleyan Unitarianism seems to have regarded itself as secure about the time of the polemic emergence of Theodore Parker (b. 1810; d. 1860), student, linguist, preacher, and reformer. A sermon by him on "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity" (1841) was the first shot in a campaign that notably affected average American thinking.

Parker is a signal example of American energy. Grandson of one of the fighting leaders at the battle of Lexington, son of a New England farmer-mechanic and an energetic mother, he worked on his father's farm till, at seventeen, he could act as a "winter schoolmaster"; from which status he proceeded to that of a Harvard student, labouring on the farm while he passed examinations up to 1831, when he went in residence. Working intensely on a minimum of funds, he graduated in 1836, with a stock of linguistic lore that would have qualified him as a professor in Old Testament scholarship. Fortunately he found no such opening, and became a Unitarian preacher. "When he entered the divinity school he was an orthodox Unitarian; when he left it he entertained strong doubts about the infallibility of the Bible, the possibility of miracles, and the exclusive claims of Christianity and the Church."[1] In 1841–2 he had developed those doubts to the point of utterance, in a noted sermon.

No Unitarian publisher would print it; and he came at once under a Unitarian ban which lasted till his death. In republican Boston were exhibited, under the ægis of Unitarianism, all the features of bigotry to be seen in orthodox England and in the English Unitarian attitude to Hennell. Oliver Wendell Holmes used to tell of "the incredible amount of superstition, even in good society in Boston, revealed to him by his experiences in securing the use of anæsthetics in childbirth" in his early days as a physician in Boston and professor of anatomy at Harvard.

> "I was denounced," he told Moncure Conway, "as a blasphemous infidel defying Almighty God, who had imposed on the female descendants of Eve the pains of childbirth. Even some fairly intelligent women preferred to suffer without such relief. It was a battle of years; and I had to give many lectures at our Cambridge Medical School to induce young physicians to deal resolutely with the matter."[2]

[1] *Encyc. Brit.* art. on Parker. ? By Moncure Conway.
[2] *Autobiography, Memories and Experiences of Moncure Daniel Conway*, 1904, i, 342.

Exactly the same tone was taken in Scotland when Simpson in 1847 advocated the use of chloroform in obstetrics, though in that case bigotry was partly overborne by Simpson's appointment as one of the Queen's physicians in Scotland. Thus did bibliolatrous "Christianity," at the middle of the nineteenth century, operate in Britain and America in the fashion of tabu in Polynesia.

In Boston, Professor Charles Eliot Norton told later how it had been the custom of his father, Professor Andrews Norton, a scholar of good capacity, "in their family prayers to utter a special petition against the influence of Theodore Parker's unbelief."[1] Happily, there were liberal laymen in Boston who insisted on intervening, by engaging for Parker the Masonic Hall, where in 1841–2 he delivered the lectures which constituted 'A Discourse on Matters Pertaining to Religion.' Later, after leaving his pastorate and spending a year in Europe, he preached, still in the teeth of Unitarian hostility, for many years in the Boston Music Hall to audiences approximating to five thousand.[2]

For readers in England, Parker's appeal was chiefly made through his *Discourse* (1842), though his volume of sermons on 'Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology' (1853) had also a large audience. The *Discourse*, a survey of religious and anti-religious schools of opinion, carried weight by its great array of scholarly notes, which, like his review of Buckle, show him to have been one of the hardest readers of his age. At the same time, the exposition is popular, sketchy, and indeed crude, as befitted a "respectable" platform campaign. The Sermons are still less philosophic, dealing as they do in mere eloquent vociferation and reiteration. Atheism is disposed of by calling Christian immorality "practical atheism"; and the preacher meets atheistic criticism by declaring that he would die of despair if he were not a theist. As atheists, in the terms of the case, did not so die, the only inference open was that they were more happily constituted than he. No vital problem is faced. An Infinite God, it is announced, *must* have made an infinitely perfect creation, which is then shown to be infinitely imperfect on the side of human life. The frontal attack on New England theology in general is unsparing enough to explain the resentment it aroused; but the doctrine of Divine Immanence, proffered in substitution for the supernaturalism of the traditional creed, is even less circumspect than the pantheism of Emerson, by which it seems to have been largely inspired.

Parker no more meets the ethical difficulties of pantheism than orthodoxy had met those of theism and revelationism.[3] Admittedly he was "a preacher rather than a thinker, a reformer rather than a philosopher." He was, however, showing to men disturbed over miracles and inspiration

[1] *Id.* p. 145. [2] *Id.* pp. 157, 261.

[3] "While I loved Theodore Parker and honoured him as the standard-bearer of religious liberty.....I received no important aid from his philosophy or his theology." Conway, p. 146.

and prophecy a way out of those difficulties to what seemed higher ground; at the same time he extolled the gospel Jesus, with some critical reserves, in a fashion which in our time would be credited to him for orthodoxy; and he allows "Baptism and the Supper" to "continue for such as need them."

After Parker's death Emerson sometimes preached on his platform, drawing great crowds of sympathetic folk;[1] and it was only a question of time when Parker's Universalism should carry the day over bibliolatrous Unitarianism. Two years before his death, "the orthodox sects in Boston had become so demoralized by his increasing influence that in 1858 many of them united in a special day of prayer to invoke the divine interference with Parker's reign of terror. Some of these prayer-meetings were disgraceful: the appeal of one gospeller, 'O Lord, put a hook in his jaws!' became a byword."[2]

Persecution, operating thus democratically, had the usual results. As had been predicted by the young Moncure Conway, who at first hearing "did not like him at all,"[3] Parker's influence after his death overbore Unitarian orthodoxy. When, sinking under phthisis, he had come to Europe in 1859, the alumni of the Harvard Divinity School refused to pass a vote of sympathy with him, though at that moment, as on his previous visit to England, he was being cordially received there by liberal Unitarians such as Tayler and Martineau.[4] In 1860, when Parker had died at Florence, Conway could point to twenty-five American Unitarian ministers standing by Parker's doctrine; and "in less than thirty years.....the denomination had come to the heretic's ground."[5] Of such stability are the certitudes of faith.[6]

2. At the middle of the century there are clear signs of searchings of heart even among the English University authorities. "If any Oxford man," writes Pattison, "had gone to sleep in 1846 and had woke up in 1850, he would have found himself in a totally new world.....Theology was totally banished from Common Room, and even from private conversation. Very free opinions on all subjects were rife."[7] He specifies various factors, one being the Railway Mania; but the Revolution of 1848 and the deadstop caused by J. H. Newman's withdrawal to the Church of Rome are more explicatory items.[8] That ending of the long and futile strife over Tractarianism had the effect of releasing the forces of advance. "It was a deliverance from the nightmare which had oppressed Oxford for fifteen years." The University, whose ordinary

[1] Conway, ii, 43. [2] *Id.* p. 261. [3] *Id.* p. 117.
[4] *Id.* pp. 262–3. [5] *Id.* p. 265.
[6] Parker's absolute courage on the side of the Abolition of Slavery doubtless counted for much in later memory, as against the pro-slavery attitude of most of the old Unitarians. See his Sermons, as cited.
[7] *Memoirs*, p. 244.
[8] The issue of the translation of Strauss (1846) may have been another factor.

studies had been at the lowest ebb during those years, at once began to regenerate.[1]

Paley had never been much stressed at Oxford; now he is seen losing ground at Cambridge. In 1850 there appears a new Cambridge edition of the *Evidences* and the *Horæ Paulinæ*, with an apparatus of analyses, notes, and questions, and with a preface stating that in the previous year it had been decreed by the Cambridge Senate that in 1851 the Scriptures and the Evidences shall "assume a more important place than formerly in the Previous Examination." At the same time it is recorded that Paley had been used in this fashion since 1822; that in 1837 the *Evidences* had been discontinued, and the *Moral Philosophy* retained; and that even in the Grace of 1849 the former is not specified.

It would appear that the final futility of Paley's argumentation about the "twelve good men" and other matters had been realized by the majority of the heads of the Cambridge colleges; and that while "Evidences" must still be arranged for, the field was left open.[2] The editor of the 1850 edition, Mr. Robert Potts, M.A., is satisfied that Paley remains irrefutable, though he avows that

> the infidel spirit under the garb of Christian philosophy has assumed a new shape, not presuming to question the general truth of Christianity, but setting itself to show that there is much in the Christian Scriptures which is not in accordance with the laws of the human mind, and that Philology is the science whereby the truth is to be determined. One of these philosophers declares that "The Pentateuch does not contain more truth than the Epic Poetry of the Greeks."[3] Another concludes that "If you except all that relates to angels, demons, and miracles, there is scarcely any mythology in the New Testament." A third asserts that "The revelation of the Gospel was but an accident of the eternal revelations of God in nature and in history. A fourth sees in Christianity only an *idea*, of which the religious value is independent of history.....And, further, that it is not necessary to know whether the Gospel rests on historic truth." "Philosophy," they say, "considers Christianity itself an abstraction. If she judges its dogmas to be reasonable, she declares that it has in itself eternal truth, beside which all other is a shadow; whence it follows that we need not disquiet ourselves concerning its historic truth."[4]

References are prudently withheld; but the sources are visibly for

[1] *Memoirs*, pp. 236–7. See pp. 92–3 as to the small classical scholarship of Hurrell Froude, and of tutors generally, in the 'thirties.

[2] In 1854 there appeared a "Report upon Religious Worship in England and Wales, founded upon the Census of 1851," which purported to show that every Sunday there were five and a-quarter millions of non-attendants at church out of twelve and a-half millions of adults capable of attendance. In the absence of previous statistics it is difficult to say what was proved. In the same report Horace Mann is cited as claiming that in the United States there is an increase in church-going and religious study among the middle and upper classes. (Citations in Miss Hennell's *Christianity and Infidelity*, 1857, pp. 86–7.)

[3] It may be remembered that Geddes had been saying such things at the close of the previous century.

[4] Work cited, pref. pp. viii–ix.

the most part German. And it was perhaps a sound decision that for English purposes the Paleyan argument was still the thing the situation called for. Mr. Potts takes much satisfaction in relating how Paley had qualified himself for his great task in youth by spending all his holidays attending the Courts of Law in London and the Parliamentary debates. That was, after all, the direction in which undergraduate ambitions mainly pointed—apart from the career of the Church.

At that moment a new impulse had been given to scepticism from within the Church by the memorable controversy over the case of the Rev. George Cornelius Gorham, who in 1847 had been presented to the living of Brampford Speke in the diocese of Exeter. Gorham having taught, as against the dogma of "the unconditional regeneration of infants in the sacrament of baptism," that deceased infants were really regenerated "by an act of grace prevenient to their baptism," the bishop refused to institute the new incumbent. Gorham then appealed to the Court of Arches, of which the Dean gave his decision in favour of the bishop after nearly a year and a half of deliberation.[1]

In point of fact the Articles were on the side of Gorham, while the formularies supported the bishop. Gorham accordingly appealed to the Privy Council, of which the Erastian judges summoned to their aid the two Archbishops and the Bishop of London. Of those prelates it is recorded, on the clerical side, that "little trust was felt generally in their competence."[2] Furious protests were circulated before the case was tried;[3] and when in 1850 a decision was given in Gorham's favour, with a conciliatory statement of the impossibility of reconstituting Church law, there arose a fierce controversy, the Bishop of Exeter leading off with a minatory and mutinous letter to his Archbishop, whereafter he proceeded to call his clergy together in synod to affirm the true faith as to baptismal regeneration. For that senseless doctrine they exhibited a fervour of devotion which they would never have paid to any cause of wronged humanity; and there was given to the intelligent onlooking laity a new sense of the essential unreason of sacerdotalism.

Meantime both abstract and concrete inquiries were increasing the pressures on the old defences. Even in the 'forties, apart from the propaganda of the freethinkers in the area of the Owenite and other socio-political movements, and the translations of Strauss, there were stirrings of the academic waters. As early as 1839, indeed, Lucy Aikin writes[4] to Dr. Channing: "A learned but heretical Cambridge divine tells me: 'this generation of us *think*, the next will speak.'" We have seen how Blanco White's transition to Unitarianism had disturbed his Anglican friends in the 'thirties; and the issue of his 'Observations on

[1] Trial 1848; judgment August 2, 1849. Perry's *History of the English Church*, 1887, iii, 275.
[2] Perry, iii, 276.
[3] The official historian accuses one clerical gainsayer of an "enormous falsehood."
[4] *Correspondence*, as cited, pp. 336–7.

Heresy and Orthodoxy' (1839), a cogent piece of reasoning, had influences of a kind not produced by ordinary Unitarian propaganda.

The early years of the sixth decade, in which we find a marked forward movement of critical thought, may also be noted as the years of maximum vehemence of bigotry. In 1852 we find the popular publisher Henry Bohn reissuing the worthless apologetic works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, with a "Publisher's Preface" in which they are said to "maintain an acknowledged pre-eminence," though written "at a period of our national history when the writings of Volney and Gibbon, and especially of Thomas Paine, fostered by the political effects of the French Revolution, had deteriorated the morals of the people, and infused the poison of infidelity into the disaffected portion of the public." We have here still the blatant note of early-nineteenth-century Anglican respectability. Fuller is at once one of the most rabid and one of the most futile of the thousand and one defenders of the faith. A sample of his mind and method is the verdict that "If the light that is gone abroad on earth would permit the rearing of temples to Venus, or Bacchus, or any of the rabble of heathen deities, there is little doubt but that modern unbelievers would in great numbers become their devotees; but, seeing they cannot have a God whose worship shall accord with their inclinations, they seem determined not to worship at all."[1] In the very next year the same publisher began the issue of a reprint of Gibbon, with variorum notes, edited by "An English Churchman," who for the most part defended Gibbon against his orthodox critics. This enterprise brought upon the pious publisher a fair share of odium; and it is interesting to record that in 1876 Mr. Bohn was avowedly ready to testify on behalf of the defendants in the prosecution of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant for the publication of the Knowlton pamphlet on Population. He had moved with the times; and his edition of Fuller had probably elicited criticisms which started his progress.

So far, indeed, was orthodoxy from denying the advance of unbelief that in 1853 the Evangelical Alliance produced a bulky Prize Essay by the Rev. Thomas Pearson of Eyemouth, on 'Infidelity, its Aspects, Causes, and Agencies,' in which the aspects are shown to include the writings of Emerson and Carlyle, Herder and Cousin, Bailey's *Festus* and Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, as well as Strauss and Parker and Hegel and F. W. Newman and Combe; while "infidel rationalism" is declared to be spreading in the Protestant parts of the Continent, alongside of a Catholicism no less objectionable. The antidote offered is not impressive; but a Committee was formed to arrange for the issue of a cheap edition of the volume; and in its prospectus occurs the declaration that "Strauss, Hegel, Parker, and Combe" are being "eagerly purchased, read, and

[1] *The Gospel its Own Witness*, 1799, rep. in Bohn's ed. of *The Principal Works and Remains of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1852, pp. 136–7.

mentally mastered by the masses of our working men and women. Vulgar and ignorant Infidelity has almost disappeared, but its place is supplied by various shades of metaphysical Atheism, thoroughly fortified by the study of some or all of the authors mentioned."[1] It remains to note how the movement thus recognized as existing was furthered on other social levels by a continuous propaganda of more or less scholarly quality.

One of the mirroring minds of the time is Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–61), first the docile disciple of Dr. Arnold and later the frustrated follower of Carlyle. Deeply rooted in inculcated religion, he came by his own power of judgment as well as by the help of Strauss to a clear recognition of the nebulous historicity of Christian origins, while holding to the emotional "tradition" and to a much eroded form of theism. "I do think," he writes privately in 1852, "that the Christian religion is the best, or perhaps the only good religion that has appeared: on the other hand, as to how it appeared, I see all possible doubt.....The whole origin of Christianity is lost in obscurity."[2]

"A great many intelligent and moral people," he goes on, "think Christianity a bad religion. I don't, but I am not sure, as at present preached, [that] it is quite the truth." The idiosyncrasy of the finely gifted Clough was the shortage of active mental energy[3] which has left him represented in literature by two small but singular masterpieces, in a new art form, and a quantity of tentative verse. The structural lack did not affect his critical judgment; but his attitude to the general problem of religion is one of the illustrations of the paralysing effect of an intensive religious training. For him, honesty of action was a cardinal principle. Yet he finds himself in a mental *impasse* in which the vital test of truth has for him only a negative significance. He can neither believe nor reject. Others, happily, reacted more vitally.

3. Of "academic" publications, we may note Francis W. Newman's booklet on 'Catholic Union' (1844), "a plea for a 'church of the future' on an ethical basis, leaving theological questions open"; his 'History of the Hebrew Monarchy' (1847); and his treatise on 'The Soul, her Sorrows and her Aspirations' (1849), regarded by some as "perhaps the most influential of his works."[4] F. W. Newman is in fact fitly described as for a time carrying on single-handed the battle between moral reason and evangelicalism,[5] albeit on theistic presuppositions. None of these works, however, created any such excitement as had the Tractarian controversy under the impulse of the elder Newman; nor is any of them "epoch-

[1] Cited by Holyoake, *The Trial of Theism*, ed. 1877, p. 104.
[2] *Memoir and Letters*, in *Poems and Prose Remains*, 1869, i, 171–2.
[3] His death by paralysis, at the age of forty-two, points to congenital causes.
[4] Rev. A. Gordon, in *D. N. B. Sup.* article. Mr. Benn pronounces it "obsolete and forgotten," though noting that Stanley thought it might outlast all the writings of the Cardinal (*Hist. of Eng. Rationalism*, ii, 32).
[5] Benn, ii, 17.

marking." The treatise on 'The Soul' appealed to those who, like its author, took quasi-intuitional theism for granted and ignored the philosophic problem. The book on Hebrew history, though applying the method of naturalist criticism to the supernaturalism of the Old Testament, similarly takes for granted an early intuitionist monotheism among the Hebrews where scientific analysis was later to reveal, on the contrary, a primary polytheism and a tribalist Yahwism, which only after centuries evolved, by help of foreign thought, into a far from ethical monotheism never purged of the original leaven of mere naturalism.

4. More disturbing than any of these systematic treatises was the novel entitled *The Nemesis of Faith* (1848), for the writing of which J. A. Froude had to give up his Fellowship and leave Oxford. It had an excellent advertisement in the dramatic procedure of Professor Sewell, who seized a copy from a student and threw it into the fire in Hall, the result being the speedy sale of the entire first edition. To the second, Froude put a preface in which, discussing the experience of his hero, he observed concerning "the Hebrew mythology" that "large portions of it have become equally incredible with the Greek"; proceeding to declare, with Plato, Paul, St. Augustine, Calvin, and Leibniz, "that this universe, and every smallest portion of it, exactly fulfils the purpose for which Almighty God designed it.....In His eyes, all is as he willed it to be."

When he balanced his positions by protesting that the Bible is a human product, "to be judged exactly as all other books"; that the New Testament "has to me outweighed all the literature of the world"; that, like Plato, he deplores the imposition of false myths on children, and, like him, finds "the world living in practical Atheism, the clergy frozen and formal," it becomes clear that Oxford, while it could claim to teach Greek, had not yet contrived to teach its graduates to think coherently. But that did not prevent the book, with its eloquent protestations of its hero's inability to believe in the God of the Bible, from arousing a stir of response as well as of protest in the regions in which freethought in polemic forms had little chance of a hearing.

As a novel, the book turns on a sex "problem" which to-day would not raise one female eyebrow[1]; but in that day the mere obtrusion of it served official orthodoxy as a ground for pointing to the moral dangers of unbelief. When the book-burning Professor (a diligent scholar, though a medievalist, who had established a Moral Philosophy Club at Oxford) had later to leave England because of financial laxities, that form of attack was felt to be obsolete; and within ten years "a new Rector, quite as orthodox as the old, had invited [Froude] to replace his name on the books of his college." "Twenty years from this date," adds his biographer,

[1] George Eliot had sent Froude a sympathetic letter praising his book, but signing only as "Translator of Strauss," and refusing to write further. They met, however, at Coventry. Bray's *Autobiography*, pp. 75–6.

"an atheistic treatise might have been written with perfect impunity by any Fellow of any college."[1]

5. Perhaps the most stimulating if not the most solidly influential treatise of the 'forties, as regards the reconsideration of religious belief, was the 'Vestiges of Creation' (1844 or 1840), anonymously published, but revealed ten years later as the work of Robert Chambers, the well-known Edinburgh publisher and literary archæologist. That will come up for notice in the survey of the emergence of the doctrine of Evolution; but the hostility shown to it from the start, despite its consistent profession of theistic views, proved that it was seen to involve radical dissent from Biblical theology; and it told powerfully for new free-thinking. It is in the next decade that the direct criticism of Christian credences, deriving from the deists of the eighteenth century, popularized by Paine, and newly formulated for English lay readers by Hennell, was resumed and enforced apart from the work of the professed and militant freethinkers.

6. Meantime, the disintegration of orthodox Unitarianism was revealing itself from the pulpit in England as in America. The first declared Unitarian preacher at South Place Chapel, William Vidler, had lost all the richer part of his congregation by his step.[2] Now the newer orthodoxy began to crumble. In 1849 appeared a volume of lectures on 'The Religious Ideas,'[3] by W. J. Fox, the famous South Place preacher and Free-Trade orator, who, nearing the end of his strenuous life, now parted company with all sectarian ties, rejecting all specifically Christian tenets, and proclaiming a universalist Theism, in the spirit of Theodore Parker, who had certainly influenced him, though liberality had been the note of his preaching from the first. And he brought with him to this point, despite certain personal troubles with old adherents, a cultured congregation, much above the average intellectual level. These conveyances of light and leading to bodies of laity by the platform or pulpit utterance of outstanding men such as Parker and Fox, as later by such powerful orators as Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, have counted for much in breaking up the hard-trodden ground of orthodoxy in the English-speaking lands.

7. A new trouble, however, was to come upon the Unitarian world. In 1851 were issued the 'Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development' by H. G. Atkinson, F.G.S., and Harriet Martineau. Mr. Atkinson, who in later life was known to freethinkers chiefly as an ardent partisan of the Bacon-Shakespeare theory[4], would on his own account have made no great impression[5]; but Harriet Martineau (1802–76)

[1] Herbert Paul, *Life of Froude*, 1905, p. 49. [2] Conway, *Centenary History*, p. 12.
[3] Described in Dr. R. Garnett's *Life of W. J. Fox*, 1910, pp. 296–300.
[4] Bradlaugh used to allow him space in the *National Reformer*, where he poorly stated his case, never meeting the vigorous criticism he incurred. His Baconism was a product of devout admiration of Bacon as a thinker. See Bray, *Autobiography*, p. 78.
[5] He gets no notice in *D. N. B.* or *Encyc. Brit.*

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was one of the most distinguished publicists of her day, and was cherished as such by the denomination in which she had been reared. That she, as a result of having been mesmerically cured of a long-standing illness by her friend, should have adopted his semi-mystical and semi-materialist anti-theism, was a scandal to the entire Unitarian body, of which her brother James was becoming a leading light if not a zealous apostle, and the book caused a much wider and angrier commotion than had been produced by the eloquence of Fox.

Personalities apart, it could have passed for an interesting though factitious exchange of private letters of speculation and expatiation on new problems suggested by mesmerism and phrenology. Some of Atkinson's criticisms on phrenology should have impressed its cultivators. But the book has the vital fault of colligating a body of assertions without proof. As Miss Martineau avows, in taking on herself the responsibility of its planned existence, "to establish by evidence the facts and conclusions contained in these Letters would require many volumes." It is thus, as a *treatise*, in the air; and the plea of a duty to communicate "truth" falls to the ground. The authors should have remembered that the realm of vacancy, the field of the unproved proposition and the blank hypothesis, is the heritage of theology, not of rationalism.

Nevertheless, the book had virtue as stirring the waters. The explicit announcement, by the most influential woman-writer of the day, that she had abandoned the whole religious system in which she had been educated, finding even Unitarianism an outworn body of dogma, was a portentous thing in English life. Professor William Gregory of Edinburgh, a noted chemical publicist in his day, and author of 'Letters to a Candid Inquirer on Animal Magnetism' (1851), wrote to her that "Although you and I may not live to see it, whether all your conclusions be subsequently established or not, no work has ever yet borne your name fit to be compared with the 'Letters' in its ultimate effect for good on the human race." This somewhat sanguine forecast is explained by the further remark that "We require to be roused from the lethargy of our priest-ridden mental slumber; and a more effectual rousing than that given by the 'Letters' it is not easy to imagine."[1]

There was certainly plenty of commotion. Charlotte Brontë, as befitted a clergyman's daughter, did not "feel that it would be right to give up Miss Martineau entirely," arguing that one should "separate the sinner from the sin," leaving God to judge her. When, however, Harriet later indulged *her* censorious vein against Charlotte, the latter was perhaps the readier to end their relations. (Letters in *The Brontës and their Circle*, by Clement Shorter, ed. 1914, pp. 256–7, 341.)

James Martineau had the bad judgment to review the book, and the worse taste to write of his sister as being in humiliating subjection to

[1] Cited by Mrs. Chapman in the *Autobiography, with Memorials*, iii, 307.

an inferior mind; whereafter he was surprised to learn, when three years later he inquired, that he had alienated her. The discussion on the subject by his biographers, who do not conceal their misgivings, shows that Martineau's recollection of the deliberations of the editorial committee of the *Prospective Review*, in which the attack appeared, was extremely different from that of his colleagues, who must have felt the impropriety of his reviewing the book at all. He had ground for resentment in a phrase about Christianity being destined to be one day dismissed as "an old wife's tale," though he was later to go far to justify it; but he had himself called certain theologians "liars for God" (*Life*, i, 131).

He had figured as an eminent Christian in respect of his 'Endeavours after the Christian Life,' and this was how he fulfilled his ideal. His sister has put the case in her *Autobiography* (ii, 354): "I certainly had no idea how little faith Christians have in their own faith till I saw how ill their courage and temper can stand any attack upon it. And," she adds, "the metaphysical deists who call themselves free-thinkers are, if possible, more alarmed and angry still. There were," however, "some of all orders of believers who treated us perfectly well; and perhaps the settled orthodox had more sympathy with us than any other class of Christians.....Certainly the heretical—from reforming churchmen to metaphysical deists—behaved the worst."

The practical outcome of the book was the revelation to the world that a woman who had worked hard and successfully with the Unitarian outfit of beliefs, without being very happy, had found a new serenity and energy in abandoning her old creed and definitely denying that anything could be known of the "First Cause," or that Christianity was worth preserving. Her brother, strangely perverting a passage by Atkinson to the effect that visibly bad natures show the vanity of the theological view of "responsibility," had charged both writers with repudiating the idea of "obligation"—the usual theological gambit against rational ethic. In old age, while misstating the facts as to his own action, he had the grace and magnanimity to avow that in her closing period of unbelief she had developed "a cheerful fortitude, an active benevolence, an unflinching fidelity to conviction, on which I looked with joyful honour."[1]

8. James Martineau, meantime, had himself progressed in heresy to the point of seeing no meaning, from the Christian point of view, in the expression "Jesus the Messiah," which he himself had freely employed in the past; and had actually used language that laid him open to the charge of "denying moral obligation," in that it expressed reliance only on "the authority of goodness."[2] But Martineau was destined to no solid attain-

[1] *Life and Letters*, i, 225.

[2] *Id*, i, 231. We have, he wrote, "set up the chief Judaic error as the chief Christian verity." In later life, he "attached the greatest importance" to this view. Cp. Dr. Moncure Conway's memorial article in *The Open Court*, May, 1900.

ment in ethical or philosophical thought, being for his school, as some of its alumni latterly recognized, a distinguished rhapsode rather than a whole-hearted thinker.

His philosophy is sampled in his account of the Religion of Christendom—thus distinguished from "the Creed of its Founders"—as "never absent from the mind of God" [from which, on his postulate, *nothing* could *ever* be absent] "and never pausing in its course of execution," while it "had yet evaded the notice of all observers."[1] For such a Priest of the Word there was nothing to be learned from an outlook such as that of his sister, in which new knowledge stirred new wonder and joy and hope. The rhetor who was confident of "communion with God" could gain nothing from even the soberest science, though in old age he recognized the decline of his own creed.

It had seemed fit to him in 1851 to describe his sister and her friend, despite their postulate of a First Cause, as atheists, knowing that for most of his pious readers that epithet had the flavour of "leper." He lived to pronounce the philosophy of Spinoza atheistic,[2] under no illusion as to the relative importance of that philosophy and his own in contemporary eyes. More surprising than his perturbation over the 'Letters' was that of Emerson, who, soon after confessing privately that in his most thoughtful moments he inclined to speak of Deity as "It," was deeply dejected to find that his friend Harriet Martineau had done the same thing.[3] Emerson had been a stimulator of much of the progressive thought of such neologians as Parker and his later adherents; but the spirit of a new concern for consistency was beginning to dismiss his forever incoherent pantheism as it was dismissing the survivals of deism. At the middle of the century, the stir of new thought was becoming ominous even to forward-looking minds.

9. In the 'fifties, critical books written for respectable readers begin to appear in noticeable number, with a more or less directly avowed aim of unseating or unsettling orthodox faith. Even such a book as Leigh Hunt's 'Religion of the Heart' (1853), professing to promote a reconciliation between "Christianism" and unbelief,[4] contains propositions stringently critical of ordinary theism as well as of orthodox practice.

> Hunt is quoted in 1845 as speaking of Christianity in a fashion of which the then orthodox reporter does not seem to have detected the irony: "Christianity he spoke of with deep reverence; and from the very strife and bloodshed which it has caused he inferred the surpassing value of that which God had thought worthy of this fearful purchase" (*Life and Letters of Professor W. B. Hodgson*, 1883, p. 56). At the same time Hunt "spoke of the prevalence of bigotry and

[1] *Life and Letters*, i, 230. [2] *A Study of Spinoza*, 1882, pp. 349–50.

[3] D. G. Haskins, D.D., *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 1886, pp. 53–4. Cp. *Modern Humanists Reconsidered*, pp. 61–2.

[4] The title originally proposed was *Christianism, or Belief and Unbelief Reconciled*,

intolerance in this world, and the spread of liberal, or, as some would call it, infidel opinions.....He declared his perfect contentment with all things as they were."

Hunt really remained at his old standpoint, critical of Christian practice and indifferent to Christian dogma, while professing the usual non-philosophic deism. "It seems clear to me," he writes at the close of his *Autobiography* (ed. 1878, p. 401), "that the knell of the letter of Christianity itself has struck, and that it is time for us to inaugurate and enthrone the spirit.....Dogma.....has ceased to be a vital European principle; and nothing again will ever be universally taken for Christianity but the religion of Loving Duty to God and Man; to God as the Divine Mind which brings good and beauty *out of blind-working matter*....."

10. But already in 1850 there had appeared the powerful work of Francis William Newman (1805–97), 'Phases of Faith, or, Passages from the History of my Creed,' which had both an immediate and a lasting influence; and 'The Creed of Christendom: Its Foundations contrasted with its Superstructure,' by William Rathbone Greg (1809–81), who was to be in the next thirty years a prominent publicist, undiscredited by his heresy. His book, begun in 1845 and finished in 1848, has no historical importance, undertaking as it does only to overthrow the tenet of Inspiration, and to prove that "the apostles" imperfectly understood and transmitted the doctrine of Jesus. Dale Owen and Hennell had done more. But Greg's book had a steady small sale up to its third edition in 1873, whereafter it was frequently reprinted.[1]

By Greg's avowal, the *Phases*, which had appeared earlier in the same year, had deeply impressed him with the necessity of challenging the authority of the Bible. Francis Newman's book in point of fact created much more hostility than did Greg's, being attacked with aggressive insolence by a publicist of the time, Henry Rogers, in a volume entitled 'The Eclipse of Faith.' Newman had very plainly and candidly recited his passage from orthodoxy to simple theism—a narrative not now enthralling but stamped with sincerity;[2] and the attack, widely acclaimed by the religious press, as such attacks so commonly are, hastened the second edition of the 'Phases,' which appeared in John Chapman's 'Library for the People' in 1853, with a reply to Rogers that very adequately discredited him in turn, for the new generation of readers.

11. Greg and Francis Newman were at one in a confident proclamation of theism, paying no heed whatever to the Butlerian argument that

[1] Nassau Senior has a quaint note on the book in his journal in 1852. "I have long been anxious to get somebody to do what I have not time to do, to look impartially into the evidences of Christianity, and report the result. This book does it" (*Corr. and Conv. of Alexis de Tocqueville with N. W. Senior*, 2nd ed. 1872, i, 21).

[2] "A masculine, straightforward logic which puts the tortuous sophistry of his brother to shame." Benn, ii, 27.

anomalies are to be expected in Revelation as in Nature. That argument, indeed, by reason of its avowal of anomalies in revelation, was never much used for popular orthodox propaganda. But close upon their works came one of a closer and firmer logical tissue, 'The Task of To-day,' by Major Thomas Evans Bell (1852), sold at a shilling, in 'The Cabinet of Reason.' Issued by the freethinking publisher James Watson, that poorly printed little volume did not command the attention of the respectable educated world. It was nevertheless, though a young man's work, as well-written and as valid a piece of argument as the 'Phases of Faith,' and was in fact handled in a more workmanlike fashion, if without the peculiar personal appeal of that moving treatise.

Bell, a soldier and a man of affairs,[1] deeply interested alike in religious and social questions, writes with the distinction of a man of culture, avoiding any parade of learning, and avowing that he finds it easier to translate from French than from Greek, and consequently uses a recent French edition of the Fathers. Yet his campaign is particularly well schemed, handling alike as it does the historical, the ethical, and the philosophical problems with a clear vision of the logical issues. And the unreasoned theism of Greg and Newman is here critically transcended. Though he raises no doubt of the historicity of Jesus in rejecting the supernatural, he meets the theistic "intuition" with the reminder that the God-inference is of the order of the beliefs in ghosts and fairies, held with unshakeable conviction by half the human race.

Writing in connection with the democratic freethought movement, Bell is thus taking up the scientific position of modern thought while the academics are still content with a composite of the plea of intuition and the plea of moral and emotional "need" for a God-idea. And he gives no footing for the disingenuous pretence, resorted to alike by Comte and Spencer, that "atheism" connotes a claim to explain an infinite universe.

> "The atheist," he writes, "does not attempt to prove that no invisible, superior powers and intelligences exist, but only that the various narratives of supernatural interferences with the course of Nature, and the numerous pretensions to revelation, are false and erroneous, and that there is no necessity or reason for supposing such a creating, adapting, guiding, or sustaining power. And that the idea of an Omnipotent Will negatives and contradicts all that we know of the inexorable facts and laws of the universe, and is in itself a contradiction."[2]

Had he but added that the traditional practice of listing anthropomorphic "attributes" of the Absolute was a puerility already long disallowed by

[1] No Anglo-Indian of his day was more highly esteemed than Evans Bell by the peoples and native princes of India. His powerful resistance to the annexationist policy of Dalhousie and others meant the arrest of his official career; but after leaving the service in 1863 he devoted himself to the championship of native causes. Of his ten or more works on Indian matters his 'Retrospects and Prospects of Indian Policy' (1868) is of special importance to the historian of British India.

[2] Work cited, p. 105.

theistic philosophy, he would have fitly summarized his case. As it is, he is to be noted as putting with literary competence and entire amenity the honest atheism of the militant democrats who alone had hitherto fronted the theistic assumption. Writing immediately before the translation of Feuerbach, he puts a straightforward "anthropological" solution of theism in the English sense, indicating the historic evolution of the God-idea from its primitive roots where Feuerbach takes the psychological position, demonstrating that all theism *must* be "anthropology," in the sense of being a verbal transference to the Infinite of human ideals, yearnings, passions, with the inseparable result of endless self-contradiction.

12. Bell's book does not appear to have been reprinted, possibly because of the still normal proclivity to theism. That inference is suggested by the fact that George Eliot's translation of Feuerbach's 'Essence of Christianity,' which appeared in 1853, seems to have attracted very little attention,[1] either then or later, since it created no trouble for her when, five years afterwards, she stepped into fame with 'Scenes of Clerical Life, by George Eliot.' Alone among her books, the Feuerbach translation bears her real name, Marian Evans. Since "atheism" was still a term carrying social penalties, it might seem that the guardians of the faith had simply failed, among them, to detect the purport of Feuerbach's treatise, obvious as it had been in Germany. There is the alternative possibility that the more intelligent, who alone could follow Feuerbach's argument, saw the danger of meeting either the plain or the philosophic statement of the "anthropological" case, and decided to leave it alone.

On either view, the young penwoman was well entitled to give up all concern for freethought propaganda in her day and generation. Her contemporaries in mass had shown themselves blankly indifferent to a work of philosophic criticism which in Germany had made a resounding explosion, and which by its virtually new analysis of religious thought might be supposed to arrest every intelligent mind. The fair inference was that the respectable English reading world was then permeable only by forms of freethought which, in the light of Feuerbach's criticism, were seen to be platitudinous. Such work her critical faculty, penetrating if unversatile, would not let her do. She had done her work of translation, as before in the *Leben Jesu*, quite admirably, and nobody seemed to care. Well might she decide to use her literary powers on

[1] "There was no demand for it in England, and Mr. Chapman lost heavily by its publication" (Mathilde Blind, *George Eliot*, 1883, p. 48). What has been described as the second edition, issued by Trübner in 1878, with no date, was only an issue of the sheets of the first, with a new title-page. That in turn received little notice. Part of the remainder, with the old title-page, had been previously issued through the Freethought Publishing Company, with "George Eliot" on the back of the binding, to the unconcealed displeasure of Mr. and Mrs. Lewes,

lines of less resistance, leaving the criticism of religion to other pens. If in the result she partly lost her critical balance, on the historical side, she none the less acquired an influence which in itself was corrective of much loose thinking; and her friends saw nothing to deplore. Broadly, the proclamation of crude theism as a substitute for Christianity seems to have been regarded by most educated people as the only "practical" form of unbelief about 1850, as it had been a century before.

13. Something like a practical alternative, indeed, was recognized by a number of disturbed minds in the Comtist scheme of a Religion of Humanity, which was now making its appeal to those who felt the traditional religion to be incredible. Harriet Martineau promptly followed up the tentative Positivism of her *Letters* with the publication, in 1853, of her condensed version of Comte's 'Positive Philosophy,' which Comte admitted to be in some respects an improvement on his own work, and which still serves to expound him lucidly, for English and French readers. It is significant that both Harriet Martineau and George Eliot turned their faces that way when they had realized that not only was the Christian creed untenable but the whole theistic presupposition a visionary product of age-long inculcations of animistic doctrine. But while Harriet Martineau, with Littré and Mill, regarded the later religion-building of Comte as a product of mental decadence, and gave it no sympathy,[1] George Eliot seems at times to have lent it some countenance. It may be that, like the ageing Comte, she could not conceive how mankind could be happy without something like the routine of "religious ordinances" by which life had been apparently stabilized throughout the ages. This was, in fact, the final attitude of Comte's more zealous English disciples.

George Henry Lewes (1817–78), the accomplished and versatile husband of the novelist, produced in the year of Harriet Martineau's condensed recast a volume on 'Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences, being an exposition of the *Cours de Philosophie Positive* of Auguste Comte,'[2] in which, both in the preface and in the biographical introduction, he emotionally affirms the positions on which Comte grounded his scheme of a "Religion of Humanity," and in effect vindicates Comte's assumption that his special experience of happiness in a personal attachment was an adequate motivation of a system of ritual, worship, and "sacraments," in which Comte and Clotilde de Vaux were to be permanent figures. Previously, J. D. Morell, in his 'Philosophic Tendencies of the Age' (1848), had expressed surprise that Comte should be taken up in England just when he was being given up in France. Lewes retorts that in France Comtism is receiving new and important adherents, in particular physiologists, at the head of whom is Littré. In point of fact Littré had been a Comtist since 1840, and was already on the way

[1] Mrs. M. W. Chapman's Memoir, with the *Autobiography*, iii, 312.
[2] This had previously appeared serially in the *Leader*. M. Blind, as cited, p. 83.

to the decisive rejection of the "religion" of his teacher which Mill was to make in England—albeit without assenting to Mill's criticism in other directions.

In respect of its own plans and claims the movement achieved no more in England than in France. Its English leaders—men of culture and high philanthropic aims—appear to have believed, with Comte, that there was going to be an immediate dissolution of Christian belief on a very large scale, and that a substitute religion must be got ready at once to keep order. At first the "worship of Humanity" and the rest of the apparatus were deterrent. As late as 1869, Frederic Harrison "did not at all accept Comte's idea of a Religion of Humanity," though a professed Comtist; and "nothing in the shape of a 'service' on Positivist lines was attempted in the Positivist chapel for the first years of its foundation."[1] But after holding out long against the apostolic zeal of Dr. Congreve, and indeed holding out on some points to the end, Harrison was converted not only to the "religion" but to the practice of prayer to the abstraction of humanity. Private and public "need" formed the excuse.

The event demonstrated the unhistorical character of the thinking which yielded the prognosis. Professing to meet a general need among unbelievers for a "Church," the Comtist movement was always the minutest of sects in England, there being simply no demand among the emancipated for the new harness. Nor did Mr. or Mrs. Lewes, despite her affectionate esteem for "dear Comte," attempt to strengthen, save by subscriptions, the church-making movement. Like myriads of other rationalists, they lived happily without a "place of worship."

Lewes had prudentially cited from Comte[2] the passage in the 'Discourse on the Ensemble of Positivism' in which Comte had denounced atheists as the most illogical of theologians, and vituperated "the ambitious dreams of a misty atheism relative to the formation of the universe, the origin of animals, etc."—a vain ban on astronomy and zoology which is stultified by Lewes's own vindication of scientific speculation.[3] Lewes had further declared[4] the need for a doctrine "teaching us our relations to the World, to Duty, *and to God*"—this in a treatise professedly dismissing alike theology and metaphysic. The precaution, recalling that of Bentham thirty years before, was probably unnecessary; at least there is no trace of any excitement over this, the first separate promulgation of Comtist doctrine in English.

It is worth noting that at the beginning of his fifth section, 'What are the Laws of Nature?', Lewes suddenly and irrelevantly introduces "a note addressed to me by a friend, which may help to clear up some obscurities in my own exposition." It presents, as observations which may be serviceable to the younger students of the

[1] F. Harrison, *Memories and Thoughts*, 1906, pp. 154–5.

[2] Work cited, p. 24. "The passage," says Lewes, "is surely *explicit* enough, if nothing else." [3] *Id.* p. 166. [4] *Id.* p. 12.

Positive Philosophy, the warning that in regard to the Law of Three Stages (the Theological, the Metaphysical, and the Positive) "they must not suppose, as many do, that each of the three periods had a separate and exclusive existence. On the contrary, the Theological, Metaphysical, and Positive elements have always co-existed." [It was a matter of predominance.] "The germ of Positivism will be found even in the Fetichistic stage."

This and the other remarks of the note form an important correction alike of the Comtist formula and of Lewes's statement of it, which had been put with no qualification whatever. The "friend" is not named, but is completely deferred to. It cannot have been Spencer, who would never have fetched and carried for Comtism; and the likeliest surmise is that it was George Eliot. (Compare the note on p. 62 of Lewes's posthumous *Study of Psychology*, 1879, which evidently refers to her.) That she had one of the strongest critical brains of her age, in such matters, is finally clear when, later, she analyses the incoherences of Lecky.[1] That she herself deferred in practice to her husband's enthusiasm for Comte (which was not very judicially countered by Spencer, with his paternal leaning to his own Classification of the Sciences), seems quite in keeping with the recurring emotional overbalance of her character. But hers was the faculty, nonetheless, to recast the loosely stated Law of the Three Stages.

14. The critical advance continued on theistic lines. The fact that Francis Newman had in his youth been so zealous a Christian as to have run the risk of death at the hands of a mob of infuriated Moslems in Syria for selling New Testaments,[2] gave his renunciation of his creed a certain human importance; and his earnest argumentation over the successive steps of his departure from orthodoxy must have impressed any open mind. He arraigns alike the incredibilities of narrative and the incompatibilities and "impieties" of Christian doctrine; and his searching ethical criticism in the chapter 'On the Moral Perfection of Jesus' powerfully counters alike the unreason of orthodoxy and the abstract idealism of Strauss.

Mr. Benn has specially noticed Francis Newman's *Phases of Faith* as being "the most formidable direct attack ever made against Christianity in England" (ii, 26), adding that "Charles Hennell had spoken without the authority of a scholar. Francis Newman was a scholar armed at all points, whose competence none could deny; and not only a scholar but a master of clear and impressive

[1] It is on record that "to obtain *emotional relaxation* after writing 'Adam Bede' she read through [Spencer's] Psychology the second time." Letter of Youmans, in Fiske's *Life of Youmans*, 1894, p. 127. The fact seems to be that she habitually overtaxed her powerful brain and her ill co-ordinated nervous system.

[2] *Phases*, 2nd ed. p. 134.

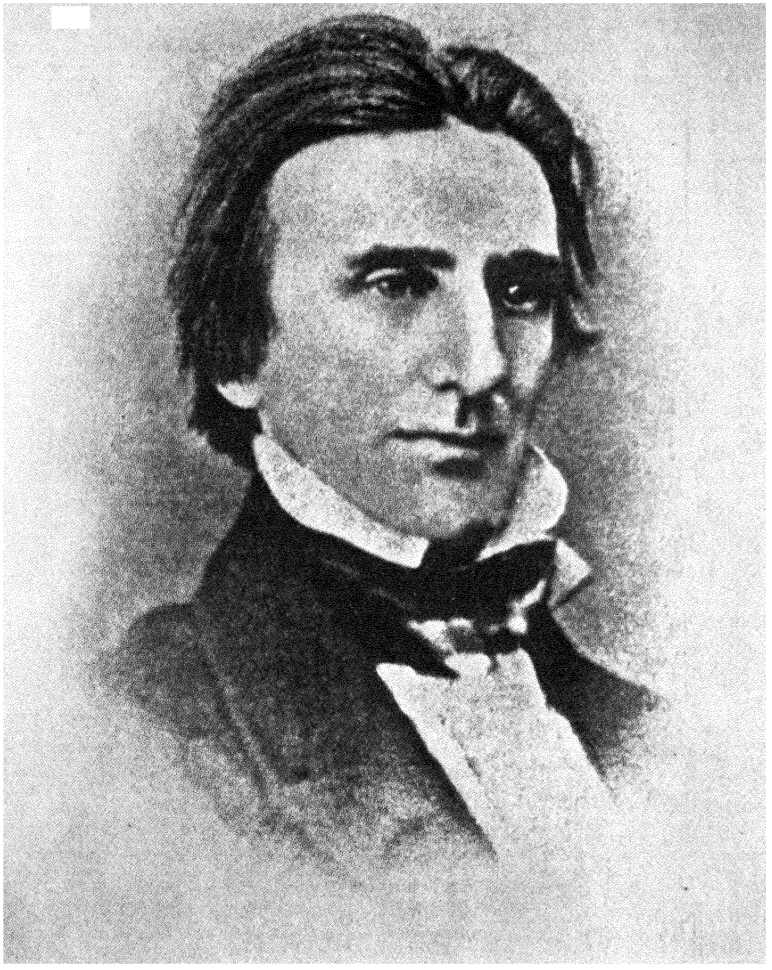
language." The first statement is probably just in regard to the moral weight of the book; the second calls for criticism. It appears to imply that the *opinions* of a "double first" have as such special weight in matters of historical or ethical criticism—not a convincing claim. There were many ripe *scholars* on the side of orthodoxy.

When all is said, Hennell's book, in its method, matter, and arrangement, is more scholar*like* than Francis Newman's, which is, as Newman admits, "egotistical" as to form and mode of statement. Hennell's is a clear and, so far as it goes, a persuasive array of scholarly data and lucid argument, without any parade of personal considerations. Nor is Newman's theism more philosophic than Hennell's. It is not a scholar's function, *qua* scholar, to make a long recital of his inner history as to every question he handles; and the criticism might fairly be passed on the *Phases* that it does not do anything like the amount of scholarly inquiry that might be expected of it. It is in fact more a manifesto on the ethics of belief than a scholarly investigation. The militant freethinkers had handled practically all its critical points previously; and they had added a destructive philosophic criticism of the theism to which Newman uncritically adhered.

The literary verve and the moral force of the book are undoubtedly great; and the fact that, like *The Soul*, it had reached its ninth edition in 1874, testifies to its wide influence. It was doing its silent work while the fame of John Henry Newman was illusorily magnified by literary and newspaper mention. Yet it had some questionable aspects. After setting out with a protest against the unkindness of friends who withdrew from him on the ground of his heresy, the author avows (ch. iv; 2nd ed. p. 72): "For the *peculiarities* of Romanism I feel nothing, and I can pretend nothing, but contempt, hatred, disgust, or horror." And George Eliot called him "Saint Francis"! The emotions specified presumably connected with his theism, by which he held as uncritically as any Romanist. The book, indeed, illustrates as a whole the laming effect of religion on young minds (he could see in youth nothing absurd in the story of the bodily Ascension when it was put to him by an "irreligious young man"), and its tendency to stimulate bad feeling. At the close he remarks that "men are *lapsing* into Atheism or Pantheism" because religion has been made "unlovely." Hennell was saner.

15. Critical work of another kind was at this stage done by F. W. Newman's Unitarian friend and sometime colleague, James Martineau, who in a review of Bunsen's 'Hippolytus and his Age,' in 1853,[1] declares substantially for Baur's view of the early development of New Testament

[1] *Westminster Review* article, rep. in *Studies of Christianity*, 1858.



F. W. NEWMAN

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literature as a conflict between the Judaizing and the Gentilizing parties. This was almost the first adoption of a modernist attitude in the Unitarian Church, though Evanson, who in the previous century had been the first English writer to challenge the fourth gospel, had in his Letter to the Bishop of Gloucester (1805) insisted that the "author" of the first gospel was an Encratite, and therefore belonged to the second century.

Unitarianism, growing out of English Presbyterianism and insisting on the right of private judgment, had been on the whole as Bibliolatrous as any other section of the Church; though one of its ministers had attacked "Sabbatism" in the early forties[1], before the Anglicans Maurice and Baden Powell. Martineau's advance, accordingly, is as significant of neology as any such position could be on the part of any Trinitarian Churchman. It was in fact disturbing to his colleagues and fellow Unitarians.[2]

16. Others carried historical criticism further afield. In 1854 appeared, in John Chapman's 'Quarterly Series,'[3] the learned work of Robert William Mackay, 'A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Christianity.' If not marked by the wide and exact scholarship of his more massive treatise (1850) on 'The Progress of the Intellect, as exemplified by the Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews,'[4] the book is at least well grounded in the great collections of Baur and Gieseler; while the documentary criticism is original, and sounder than much that was then and has been since current. "The Gospel of Mark," he writes, "may be singled out as especially the hierarchical one. It eminently displays the neutral and arbitrary character of the later New Testament literature.....Internal evidence as well as external testimony prove the origin of Mark to have been Roman."[5] As a compendious history of Christianity to the time of Huss the treatise was an addition to the scholarly literature of freethought; and its conspectus and criticism of Christian philosophy, early and medieval, may still be found useful.

> An amusing account and criticism of Mackay, who was capable of reciting from memory a thousand lines of Virgil, comes in 1853 from his then young friend, Philip Gilbert Hamerton, afterwards eminent as an art critic. Hamerton found him a very perfect gentleman, but "Mr. Mackay's chief pursuit was one to which I would never have devoted laborious years—theology on the negative side. His idea was that the liberation of thought could only be accomplished by going painfully over the whole theological ground

[1] *Sabbatism no part of Christianity*, sermon by J. Taylor, 1842.

[2] *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, 1902, i, 262.

[3] F. W. Newman's *Phases of Faith* had also been published by Chapman, the second edition in his 'Library for the People.' In 1851 he had acquired the *Westminster Review*, with George Eliot as his sub-editor.

[4] Mr. Benn (ii, 69) dismisses this as of no value. Some of us have found it valuable; and Buckle thought highly of it. In this case, for once, Mr. Benn seems unappreciative of scholarship.

[5] Work cited, p. 137.

and *explaining* away every belief and phase of belief historically and rationally. My opinion was, and is, that all this trouble is superfluous. The true liberation must come from the enlargement of the mind by wider and more accurate views of the natural universe. As this takes place, the medieval beliefs must drop away of themselves, and we now see [1895] that this process is actually in operation. So far from devoting a life to the refutation of theological error, I would not bestow upon such an unnecessary and thankless toil the labour of a week or a day."[1]

On this prudential view, everybody should be left to remain at the mercy of theological error, until all have acquired "wider and more accurate views of the natural universe"—how wide, and how accurate, we are not told. Hamerton for his part, without carrying on any special study of the natural sciences, devoted himself first to painting (without success, by reason of having listened to the doctrines of Ruskin) and thereafter to criticism—a good deal of it negative. Only from this and a few other passages (see his *The Intellectual Life*, pp. 213–18, where the position is dubious) do we learn that he was a rationalist, who had suffered in youth from the bigotry of the orthodox around him. He became a friend of George Eliot, and from him we learn that about 1868 she was defending the practice of prayer "according to Comte." She argued ably, and, he being obstinately opposed, they "had a regular fight." (Work cited, p. 324.) Yet she ultimately gave to Comte only "a limited adherence" (Cross, *Life*, pp. 341, 620; cp. Mathilde Blind, *George Eliot*, pp. 211–12). "Parts of his teaching were accepted, and other parts rejected." The parts are not specified, either by Cross or by Harrison (*Memories and Thoughts*, p. 152); but both testify to her warm admiration of much of Comte's writing. It was largely temperamental, her attitude to Comte and to Buckle respectively having no common critical measure. The arrogance and egoism of the first did not repel her, while she found the second "an irreligious, conceited man" (Cross, p. 254).

17. A force for freethought not to be overlooked at this and other stages was the insoluble strife over dogma within the Church and between the sects. Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–72) was one of the sincerest Christians of his age, as intensely bent on the rectification of what he saw to be morally untenable theological doctrine as on the social betterment sought by his friends of the Christian Socialist movement initiated by him; and there are few more interesting psychological cases than the career of this excellent but infelicitous publicist. To an equitably sympathetic eye, he is more attractive than the much more discussed personality of J. H. Newman. For if Newman hypnotized inferior

[1] Autobiography, in '*Philip Gilbert Hamerton*.....by his Wife,' 1897, pp. 145–6.

minds into Catholicism, Maurice must have unwittingly impelled better intelligences into the road of rationalism.

His master impulse was a tingling sense of moral wrong; and this, forcing him to recast what he called the "devil-worship of the religious world"[1] into conformity at once with civilized ethic and with the official dogmas which he had embraced as being adaptable to all sound religious thinking, led him into an endless and hopeless debate. Mentally capable of good philosophic thought,[2] he is for all practical purposes fettered by his unchangeable decision to make alike his theism and his Christism a matter of emotional "need," in the fashion of the Hamiltonian school as to theism; and years before the outcry over Mansel's Bampton Lectures, in which he joined against Mansel, who called him a liar, he had really taken up the same position, which he supposed himself to rectify by declaring his theistic intuitions moral. But in effect he coincided with Mill and the rationalists in spurning the idea of a God whose morality was incommensurable with that of Man.

Maurice's 'Theological Essays' (1853) gave openings to attack in every chapter, and to misconception or hopeless perplexity on almost every page, even apart from his frequent references to orthodox doctrines as "horrible," "terrible," or "awful"; but it was on the grounds of his painfully protracted argument against eternal damnation[3] that a majority of the authorities of King's College condemned his book, pronounced his tenure of his two chairs a danger, and, on his refusal to resign, forbade him to lecture. Gladstone, who was a member of the Council, declared that the prosecution was due to "a body of laymen, chiefly lords." Substantially, it was due to "the popular clamour of the religious Press, especially the *Record*, which had for years been demanding his destruction."[4]

Persecution, as usual, evoked a rebound, and within thirteen years Maurice, after establishing the Working Men's College in London, was elected Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge. The acclaimed friend of Tennyson already outshone his enemies even in the public eye; and he died in the odour of quasi-orthodoxy. But no endorsement of Maurice's esoteric theology could save his creed in the eyes of competent criticism. With perfect sincerity to his emotions, but in deep disregard of mental law, after the manner of his master, Coleridge, he had met the modern criticism of his historic creed by earnestly avowing that it could not be maintained against Strauss by any counter-dialectic, but must rest on the sense of *need* for a Redeemer and Mediator.[5] When his rejection of the current doctrine of redemption by Blood Sacrifice led simple readers to infer that he rejected the idea of Sacrifice, he agonizedly protested that he insisted on the doctrine of the Divine Sacrifice, but with a difference.

[1] C. F. G. Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, 1907, pp. 177, 233.
[2] See the testimonies collected by Masterman, pp. 1–2.
[3] A position reached long before by many "Universalists."
[4] Masterman, p. 132.
[5] *Theological Essays*, 2nd ed. p. 65.

The difference was of his own making, on a documentary basis which could yield to no one else his conclusions.

Probably the most fatal of his dialectic dexterities was his anti-Unitarian argument to the effect that while the concept of the Trinity "makes prayer possible," the idea of a Sole God was inconsistent with prayer, however devoutly Unitarians prayed. "Is God's Will good?", he wrote, "—then why attempt to move it by petitions and intercessions? Is it not good? then how hopeless the effort must be, seeing that he is omnipotent!"[1] That is precisely the immemorial rationalistic argument against all prayer; and Maurice's notion that prayer is made rational by supposing the Deity to be threefold is not only a resort to Tritheism but a newly damaging presentment of the concept of God's Will.

Unitarians, unable to defend themselves, could easily retort pungently on this; and in the *Prospective Review* one did.[2] But among competent readers the outcome could hardly fail to be a deep impression of the philosophic futility of both positions, and the conclusion that Christian theology was a vain attempt to make barbaric religion seem reasonable. By his very sincerity in pseudo-metaphysic, Maurice had newly laid bare the nakedness of the theological land. The protraction of his reluctant argument to the effect that the "trump of doom" must be understood symbolically is a new revelation of the paralysis of judgment by Sacred Books. His solitary scream at the "pit of Atheism"[3] could avail little to redeem his philosophic bankruptcy.

> It is still just to avow that in his handling of the history of philosophy Maurice exhibits a really superior capacity. Away from his hopeless quest of rational forms for irrational dogmas emotionally accepted, he is alert, sympathetic, intelligent, and illuminating. His neglected volumes on 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy' constitute one of the most interesting of all the histories of philosophy, combining as they do adequate learning with the critical sense of justice that underlay his anxious handling of the official creed with which he had burdened himself when, in youth, he abandoned his father's Unitarianism, as did the rest of the family, each one of whom chose a different sect. Like the Newmans, the Maurices constitute a curious case in heredity.
>
> Between his very intelligent handling of past philosophy outside his dogmatic quest and his painful contortions over his creed, we can understand the remarkable contrariety of the judgments passed upon him by contemporaries. Tennyson found him "the greatest mind of them all" in the Metaphysical Society; Archdeacon Hare, his brother-in-law, went further still; and Mill pronounced that "more

[1] *Theological Essays*, pp. 434–5. Cp. pp. 416, 426.
[2] Probably Martineau. Cp. *Life and Letters*, i, 258; Maurice's *Theological Essays*, pref. to 2nd ed.
[3] *Id.* p. 95.

intellectual power was wasted in Maurice than in any one of my contemporaries." (*Autobiography*, p. 153.) Mill's further panegyric and analysis of Maurice are well worth consideration. He ranks him above Coleridge as a thinker. Carlyle, on the other hand, found him alternately very attractive and "entirely uninteresting"; and Froude reckoned "Maurice, and still more the Mauricians,.....the most hideously imbecile that any section of the world have been driven to believe in." (H. Paul's *Life of Froude*, 1905, p. 66.)

Finally, the Unitarian reviewer (Martineau?) accuses Maurice of "miserable juggling" (*Theol. Essays*, pref. to 2nd ed.). Juggling, we have seen, there certainly is—the inveterate juggling of the theologian who dare not suspect that his whole theology is but a manipulation of words. But if the shade of Maurice could meet the shade of Martineau, he might as surely convict *him* of juggling, without, perhaps, the snarl of "miserable." The ultimate theism and ethic of Martineau are verbal prestidigitations no less evasive of his problem than those of Maurice; and the latter, who had faced his up to the point of seeing the vanity of prayer to the Absolute, had certainly the dialectic faculty to expose his assailant's self-rebuttals and self-deceptions. Alike, they stand as object-lessons of the fatality of the religious quest. But of the "power wasted," Maurice's share was probably the greater.

That Martineau should have put the charge of juggling may seem incredible in view of his verdict concerning Maurice that "for consistency and completeness of thought, and precision in the use of language, it would be difficult to find his superior among living theologians" (*Life and Letters*, i, 288). But he had just as explicitly written (privately) of the *Theological Essays* that they are "on the whole shadowy and unimpressive. I hardly think a man has any business to write till he has brought his thoughts into distincter shapes and better defined relations than I find in Maurice. He seems to me to have a mere presentiment of thinking, a tentative process in that direction that never fairly succeeds in getting home" (*id.* p. 258). Such flat self-contradiction raises questions of intellectual stability, as well as of the content of Martineau's reiterated thesis of the permanence of the "self."

Martineau (*id.* p. 287) passes on J. H. Newman a just judgment, which falls equally on himself and Maurice: the rationalism rejected by each "receives the veto not of reason, but of his will." It is the enduring formula of all theological philosophy, as we shall find at the close of the century. But Arnold's well-known account of Maurice as "beating the bush with deep emotion, and never starting the hare" (*Lit. and Dogma*, 4th ed. p. 347; 5th ed. p. 360) remains a cryptic metaphor. Maurice started many hares. And Arnold's disparagement raises the question, What did he think he was doing himself?

If he meant that Maurice never faced the ultimate logical implications of his argument, he was justified. But Arnold, who did go much further, never faced the logical consequences of his own negations, remaining to the end a churchman. It remains memorable that at the point where he and Maurice coincided, their wrath against Colenso, "their unanimity is wonderful." Yet it is creditable to neither, revealing as it does only an angry aversion from simple truth-telling about the Bible.

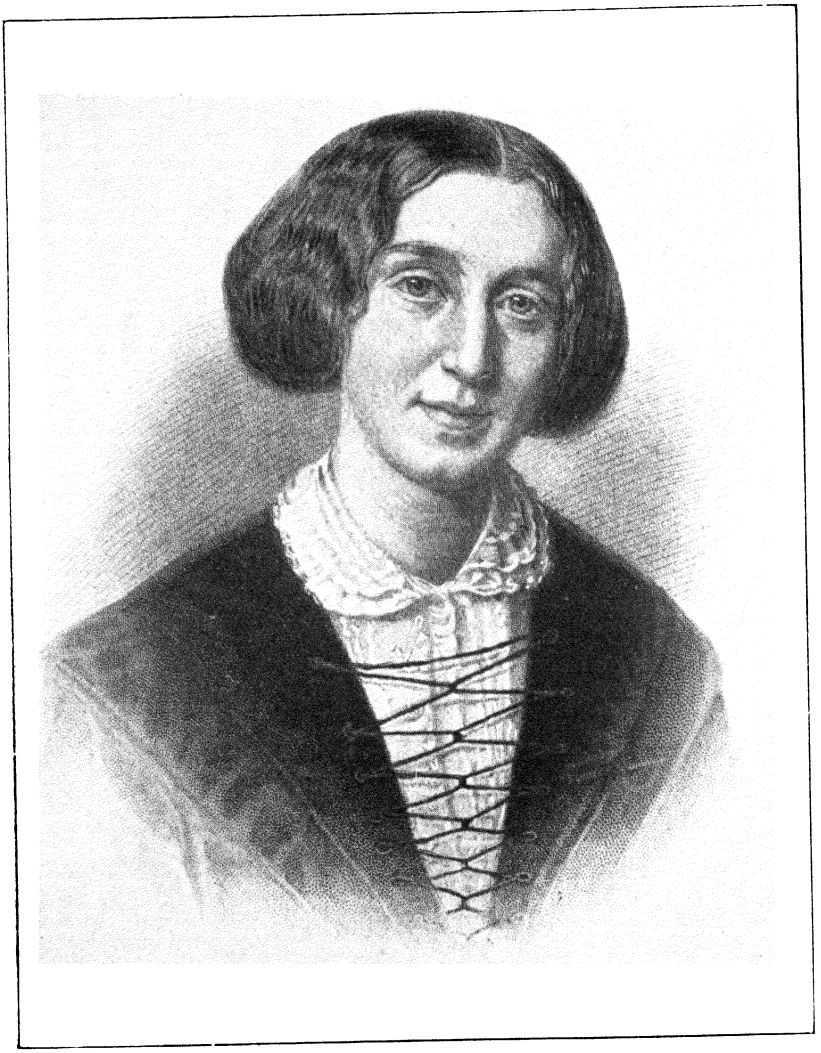
18. While theists and theologians were thus proceeding on the confident assumption that, whatever might be in dispute, the God-idea was invulnerable, the criticism of that idea was being carried on by combatants whom the prominent theists as a rule never thought of answering. Apart from the propaganda of the organized militants there appeared anonymously in 1853[1] 'An Examination of the Arguments for the Existence of a Deity; being an Answer to Dr. Godwin's "Philosophy of Atheism Examined and Compared with Christianity."' This able performance was discovered by Wheeler to be the work of Christopher Wilkinson of Bradford (b. 1803) and Squire Farrar (or Farrah), as to the latter of whom he has no biographical information. It is the outcome of a controversy begun at Bradford twenty years before, when "the tendency to infidelity in the working classes" was giving disquietude to orthodoxy. The metaphysic of the antitheists raised issues as to the concept of infinity which are not yet solved, and which were too abstruse for the orthodox champion to deal with. Yet the little book found a popular audience[2] while academic recognition of the difficulties of theism was yet to come, and while F. W. Newman took his theism for granted—twenty years before Arnold was to avow that the God-idea was but that of a "magnified non-natural man."

In high places, meantime, a measure of common sense was being called for. Baron Bunsen was already recommended to the pious public by his title as well as by his devotion to hymnology. When, therefore, he declared in his work on 'Egypt's Place in Universal History' (Eng. tr. 1854), that "it ought long ago to have been a settled point that our present popular and school chronology is a false system strung together by ignorance and fraud, and persisted in out of superstition and a want of intellectual energy,"[3] this was harsh-sounding doctrine from such a source. But even from the region of the Slave Power, where the Bible commonly ranked as warranty for slavery, came the confidently proclaimed heresy that the various race types had been permanent through all time; that man was far older than the Biblical chronology represented him to be; that the palæontologists were right and the theologians wrong;

[1] Bradford and London. Second edition in same year.

[2] In 1843 Dean Hook, at Leeds, notes "the general indifference to religion in the manufacturing districts." *Life*, by W. W. Stephens, ed. 1880, p. 347.

[3] Work cited, Eng. tr. 1854, ii, 440.



GEORGE ELIOT

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and that Genesis, being uninspired, could be interpreted in support of these views.[1]

19. The abundant critical output of the period from Hennell to F. W. Newman was usefully focussed in 1857. An "old and infirm" but mentally vigorous Scotchman, George Bailie of Glasgow, who had given a prize for a best essay "against Infidelity," bethought himself in 1854 of offering another prize, of £20, for "the most *logical* and *complete* yet *condensed* EPITOME of all *relevant* facts, arguments, and objections urgeable," on the one hand "by INFIDELITY against CHRISTIANITY, with ANSWERS *strictly relevant* thereto," and on the other hand "by Christianity against Infidelity," with Answers equally select. The prize was won by Sarah S. Hennell, sister of Charles; and her 'Christianity and Infidelity: an Exposition of the Arguments on Both Sides,' appeared in 1857.

Whatever may have been the bias of the proposer, who seems to have been at least a pantheist, and who evidently thought "Infidelity" an unobjectionable term, his award was made to a performance that was welcomed by freethinkers. The kind of capacity required was in fact unlikely to flourish in orthodox quarters. Miss Hennell seems to give the two sides equal chance as well as equal space, her Christian authors being Dr. Arnold, Butler, Channing, Locke, Martineau, Miall, Paley, Henry Rogers, and Whately, and her "infidels" her brother Charles, her brother-in-law Charles Bray, Comte, Feuerbach, Froude, Greg, Holyoake, Lewes, Mackay, and Francis Newman. Henry Rogers, the most acclaimed apologist of the day, is most freely cited on the side of faith; and Charles Hennell and F. W. Newman, perhaps, on the other. Sold at a low price, such a book, competently compiled, with impartial summaries where required, could not fail to enlarge the area of critical thinking. Apart from published debates, nothing of the sort had been done before; so that, though the freethinkers in general necessarily knew the arguments against them, the orthodox had scanty knowledge of the arguments of their opponents. For some of them the book must have been thought-provoking.

George Eliot, who seems at that time to have been on her emotional swing to Comtism, writes twice to Miss Hennell about the book, both letters indicating a perturbed state of nerves. (Cross's *Life*, as cited, pp. 213–15.) After having mentioned that her friend was suspected of giving "undue preponderance to the Christian argument," she speaks of the 'Objections of Christianity' as being more homogeneous and better put than the other side. "In many of the extracts," she adds, "I think Infidelity cuts a very poor figure" —possibly, and possibly not, forgetting that the condemned extracts were largely supplied by the writings of her own friends, including

[1] Nott and Gliddon, *Types of Mankind*, 1854, pp. 246, 327–72, 465, 550, etc.

her husband and her friend's brother and brother-in-law, and Feuerbach, whom she had translated, and Comte, whom she admired. The novelist's criticism is in fact ill-balanced, perhaps by the impossibility of explaining that her friend, who was not a "natural" freethinker, appears to have read no freethinking books before her brother's, and is not really at home in debate, however well-intentioned. Certainly the "Infidelity" side could have been more effectively put.

The most noteworthy criticism in the letters is as to the handling of the case against the Design Argument, a problem in which Miss Hennell was not expert. "I showed the passage, on the eye, p. 157, to Herbert Spencer, and he agrees with us that you have not stated your idea so as to render it a logical argument against design.....I suppose you are aware that we all three hold the conception of creative design to be untenable." [Another ground for comment as to Spencer's deistic expressions in 1860.] "We only think you have not made out a good case against it." In point of fact the "case" had been rebutted by its framer in the same paragraph in the proposition that science finds in Nature "the God that works within, the great principle of Life and Growth, and therefore of Intelligence and Love." But her worst misadventure is the citing on the "Infidelity" side, against the belief in immortality, a passage from Parker declaring the doctrine unconquerable.

20. The production of fresh fuel for the debate, 'Infidelity *v.* Christianity,' went on apace. In 1856 a beneficed clergyman, J. Macnaught of Liverpool, by a book on 'The Doctrine of Inspiration,' created much excitement, albeit he did but focus and emphasize admissions made by many divines before him. In the following year the Rev. Professor Baden Powell of Oxford, already known as an unabashed champion of geology, produced a book, avowedly evolved from "sermons delivered," in which 'Christianity without Judaism' was urged as a consummation devoutly to be wished, and the defensive geology of Hugh Miller and others was squarely confronted with the thesis, already quoted, that "nothing in geology bears the smallest resemblance to any part of the Mosaic cosmogony, torture the interpretation to whatever extent we may."[1]

As if that were not enough heresy for a reverend professor, his approval of Macnaught on inspiration was accompanied by a caveat against the "Biblical eclecticism" by which that writer extracted results never contemplated by the writers of the books; and attention was drawn to the fact that "for some acute critics" the historical difficulties of the Old Testament "are such as can only be accounted for by supposing it a compilation of fragmentary documents of various ages, put together without much regard to their historical connexion or authenticity, but

[1] *Christianity without Judaism*, 1857, App. xviii.

with a religious design."[1] Such views had been heard of, but not from reverend English professors. Added to that, a friendly footnote was bestowed on R. W. Mackay's 'Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Christianity'; and though the professor explained that he was "far from assenting to *all* the author's opinions," orthodox readers must have already reckoned him "in a parlous state," despite his opinion[2] that there was much less of irreligion about than of "low and corrupt religion."

21. Among the friendly references by Powell is one[3] to H. T. Buckle, citing with assent his generalization that an inquiring age must be a doubting age. The first volume of Buckle's 'Introduction to the History of Civilization in England,' from which the citation is made, had just appeared, and set up an extensive sensation. Buckle's significance as a sociologist will be considered later: here we have to note the definitely anti-theological drift of his work.[4] Neither his theism nor his eloquent claim[5] to establish faith in immortality on the facts of the affections could countervail his uncompromising hostility to the paralysing tyranny of ecclesiasticism in all ages, and to the theological way of interpreting history. One of the fundamental positions of his book is that the progress of knowledge is in the ratio of the activity of scepticism. The mass of the hostile criticism passed upon him, though not at all limited to theological writers, is visibly inspired by the sense of his anti-theological temper.

But that temper revealed itself to new purpose when in his review of Mill (1859) he denounced with indignant eloquence the savage sentence of twenty-one months' imprisonment passed by a judge on a crack-brained Cornish labourer named Thomas Pooley, "merely because he had uttered and written on a gate a few [ribald] words respecting Christianity." The episode had occurred in 1857, unnoticed by Buckle, and when he read of it in Mill's book he could hardly believe the story. Investigating, he found that the victim had become violently insane in jail; that an urgent petition had been got up for his release; that it was refused, with the announcement that if the lunatic were released, and recovered, he would have to complete his sentence all the same; and that only after a vigorous agitation for publicity did the authorities give way, granting a "pardon" after five months had been served.

Those who had agitated for Pooley's release had then dropped the case. Buckle girded his loins to give it the fullest publicity, formally naming the authorities concerned—the clerical prosecutor, the clerical magistrate who made the commitment of Pooley, and "the judge who passed the sentence which destroyed his reason and beggared his family,"

[1] *Id.* p. 98, *note.* [2] *Id.* p. 185. [3] *Id.* p. 9.

[4] Notably in the chapters on the Scottish Intellect. The remarks near the end, on Palmerston's reply to the Scottish clergy's appeal in 1853 for a day of humiliation on the score of the cholera epidemic, preserve a memorable episode of the period.

[5] *Miscel. Works*, review of 'Mill on Liberty,' *end.*

Mr. Justice Coleridge. The indictment left nothing to be desired in point of punitive force and lashing vehemence. The son of Mr. Justice Coleridge replied in *Fraser's Magazine* (where the attack had appeared) with a letter in which Buckle was violently vituperated for "ignorance, cowardice, malignity, and slander," being described, according to Buckle's accurate summary, as "a perverter of facts, a fabricator of falsehoods, a propagator of libels, and a calumniator of innocence." These charges Buckle, in his pamphlet of reply,[1] flicked aside with contempt, proceeding to debate the merits with (naturally) undiminished asperity and eloquence.

The defence really came to little, amounting merely to the pleas (1) that the judge had no choice but to administer the law as he found it; (2) that Buckle's charge of a "conspiracy" between the judge and the officials of the Home Office was absurd; and (3) that the judge, when passing sentence, had not been aware of Pooley's state of mind—though everybody else in court was. The first plea was in itself absurd, the judge having certainly large latitude in the matter of sentence; the third was astonishing, though Buckle gladly accepted it. In sum, he was much blamed for attacking a judge as he had done, the thing being "improper." The freethinkers naturally thought otherwise; and the total effect of the episode was to set up a new sense of the need for circumspection among magistrates and judges. Such an indictment, from a brilliant and powerful writer of independent means, was something of a portent. The age of reaction was visibly ending.

22. The work of Mill *On Liberty*, which had given Buckle his cue on the Pooley case, was the first in which the eminent economist and logician had given any suggestion of his attitude on religion, though it was well enough known to his friends. The essay was not at all an attack on current religion: the tributes to Christianity are indeed uncritical; and even the account of Christian ethics as inadequate to life is balanced by semi-contradiction. But the sustained argument for absolute freedom of discussion, carried to the extent of covering denials of theism and immortality, must have counted for much in impairing the tyranny of convention. The guarded vindication of unbelievers had the same effect:—

> If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity. It can do truth no service to blink the fact, known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with *literary history*, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected the Christian faith.[2]

The absence of mention of any names not yet noticed in literary history is significant of the continuance of the ban on open "infidelity,"

[1] *Letter to a Gentleman, respecting Pooley's Case*, 1859. *Miscel. Works.* Extracts from Mr. J. D. Coleridge's letter are given at the close.

[2] People's ed. p. 30.

as is the use of that tactful term; but educated people read between the lines; and the Autobiography took no well-informed people by surprise, sixteen years later. The remark that "No reasonable person can doubt that Christianity might have been extirpated in the Roman Empire,"[1] inexact as it is, could not well have come from a believer. Perhaps the very extravagance of some of the positions of the writer, such as the lament over the rise of "a general similarity among mankind,"[2] tended to emphasize the demand for freer thinking, and the book had the effect it sought. Carlyle's declaration of his absolute enmity to its general line of argument was the measure of his final relation to the innovating thought of his time.

23. While the new spirit was thus everywhere trying its wings, English orthodoxy was meshed in the quarrels of its professed champions. In 1857 appeared 'Christian Orthodoxy reconciled with the conclusions of Modern Biblical Learning' by the Rev. Dr. John William Donaldson,[3] whose object was to reconcile Anglican scholars to a comparatively critical handling of the Canon of Scripture, in view of modern scholarly progress. His own position was that "we have a complete criterion of Christian orthodoxy" in "acceptance of Jesus Christ as.....the son of the Living God, and therefore a Divine Person," while "we must stigmatize as antichrist all those who will not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."[4] This creed was, however, too short for Dr. Perowne, who bitterly assailed its propounder, and for the eminent scholar Dr. S. P. Tregelles, who avowed his "full belief in the absolute inspiration of Scripture," to the extent of holding "the 66 books of the Old and New Testament to be verbally the Word of God, as absolutely as were the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God on the two tables of stone."[5]

This would seem to be enough for anybody; but the devout Tregelles was in turn a heretic for others, who outwent even him in credulity. He has pathetically recorded, in his learned 'Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament' (1854), how in the past the great textual research of Dr. John Mill had been treated "as a work of evil tendency, and inimical to the Christian religion";[6] how Lachmann had latterly been aspersed by Scrivener;[7] how the most incontrovertible corrections of the current text have been angrily denounced by clerics; how he himself has been told that he is "greatly wanting in due reverence for the word of God";[8] and how Christian translators humiliate the cause by their lack of honesty.[9] Thus Tregelles, devoutly seeking to ascertain what the finger of God had actually written in the lost original MSS., was

[1] P. 16. [2] P. 43.
[3] Author of the Latin treatise *Jaskar* (1854), dismissed by Renan as a scholarly whimsy, and by Arnold, on that lead, without reading it, despite its being in Latin.
[4] Work cited, p. 409. [5] *Id.* p. 125 *note.* [6] Work cited, p. 46, quoting Marsh.
[7] P. 112. [8] P. 266 *note.* [9] P. 267.

accounted a sinner by those who uneasily saw that if God did not inspire the transcripts the cause of inspiration was lost.

Against such a hopelessly divided camp, the new forces tended to be triumphant wherever there was intelligence enough to realize the issues. Tregelles saw their advance, and could but shout invectives over the heads of his own pious foes. Sceptics and mythicists, Rationalists and "Spiritualists," "rulers of the Olympus of scepticism and infidelity," unholy devotees of "progress"—all these occupy him in his preface; in his treatise his more harassing concern is with the orthodox who are more orthodox than he. That the golden diligence of two such earnest scholars as Donaldson and Tregelles should have been turned to lead by the dead hand of dogma is one of the tragic aspects of the intellectual history of their age.

24. When in 1860 the orthodox of all grades awoke to the existence and significance of the volume entitled 'Essays and Reviews,' the shock must for many have been shattering. Frederic Harrison, then a questing youth, took to himself the credit of forcing the matter to the front by pointing out, in the *Westminster Review*, the startling quality of the book at a time when it had not been recognized. But the explosion must have come sooner or later. Every essay in the volume was in some degree freethinking. It was not a planned attack in force, being the result of an invitation to seven individuals to contribute as they thought fit; but the common element of negation told of the cumulative effect of the thinking of previous decades. In 'The Education of the World,' Dr. Temple depicted an evolution in which Christianity begins by help of Judaism, producing impermanent dogmas as it grows; and the new ideal is to "make men think clearly and judge correctly." Dr. Rowland Williams follows suit over Bunsen's 'Biblical Researches,' vigorously assailing Evangelicalism by the way. Professor Baden Powell shows that "Christian Evidences," as commonly put, are largely untenable. Heresy has become clerical merchandise.

Every contributor, of course, professes soundness on *some* fundamentals; and to-day their orthodoxies have a very old-fashioned air. But these gave small comfort as against the negations. Miracles find no abiding place. The critical method is the method of science, and Darwin is acclaimed as coming to conquer.[1] Paley is dismissed as a stumbling-block: "testimony can avail nothing against reason."[2] H. B. Wilson begins by showing how Protestantism at Geneva is in a parlous state, the evangelical revivalists being at issue on their Church principles; and the English vicar goes about to seek "the best method of adjusting old things to new conditions,"[3] in view of "the fact of a very widespread alienation, both of educated and uneducated persons," from current

[1] Baden Powell's essay, p. 139 of 9th ed.
[2] *Id.* p. 141. [3] Vol. cited, p. 148.

Christianity. In fact, the census of 1851 showed not far short of half the population staying away from church.

Formerly, then, anti-Christian agitation had been a phase of political radicalism;[1] whereas "the sceptical movements in this generation are the result of observation and thought, not of passion." In face of this state of things, many dogmas must be set aside; and selection must be made, as to the Bible, "between the dark patches of human passion and error which form a partial crust upon it and the bright centre of spiritual truth within."[2] The end of the whole matter is that the State clergy must be allowed a free hand in public as in private, and the "prudent" course is "abolition of the act of subscription" to the Articles. By this prudential tactic, Wilson seems to have given more offence than did Baden Powell. He had laid hands on the clerical ark.

Mr. Goodwin's assault on 'Mosaic Cosmogony' was in comparison almost innocuous: Baden Powell had done the work already. But Mark Pattison's 'Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688–1750,' must have been widely exasperating. It showed that from a hundred to a hundred-and-seventy years ago English churchmen in general professed, like the deists, to appeal to reason; and that both alike were proceeding on a "rationalistic fiction"[3] of impartial inquiry. In the present day, on the other hand, "a godless orthodoxy threatens, as in the 15th century, to extinguish religious thought altogether, and nothing is allowed in the Church of England but the formulæ of past thinkings, which have long lost all sense of any kind."[4] In a survey which appears to have been made piecemeal, without orderly sequence, such rocks of offence stood up to blast orthodox vision.

Nowhere in the book did the plain churchman find rest for the sole of his foot. Jowett 'On the Interpretation of Scripture' was indeed in the main sermonically vague, throwing no brickbats, just hinting offence. But to be told[5] that "the theologian too may have peace in the thought that he is subject to the conditions of his age rather than one of its moving powers," was a final concentration of gall and vinegar, equivalent to all the previous doses of scepticism. Anger accordingly wrought the purpose of advertisement; and within a year the book had passed through nine editions, spreading the knowledge of unbelief throughout the land. The official volume of answers was a total failure. The prosecutions continued the process, revealing the impotence of orthodoxy to punish, no less than to confute. The Court of Arches, grown a little bolder in ten years, quashed twenty-seven of the thirty-two charges against Williams and Wilson, passing only a penalty of two years' suspension. They in turn appealed as Gorham had done to the Judicial Committee of

[1] A partly mistaken generalization, ignoring previous history, though radicalism in the 'thirties was largely anti-clerical.

[2] P. 177. [3] P. 301. [4] P. 297. [5] P. 422.

the Privy Council, which ultimately gave judgment in their favour on all points, the two archbishops "partially" assenting. Stanley's satisfaction in the saving power of the non-committal language of the formularies, while he felt constrained to deprecate the "negative" character of the prosecuted book, is significant of the pass to which the clerical conscience had come.

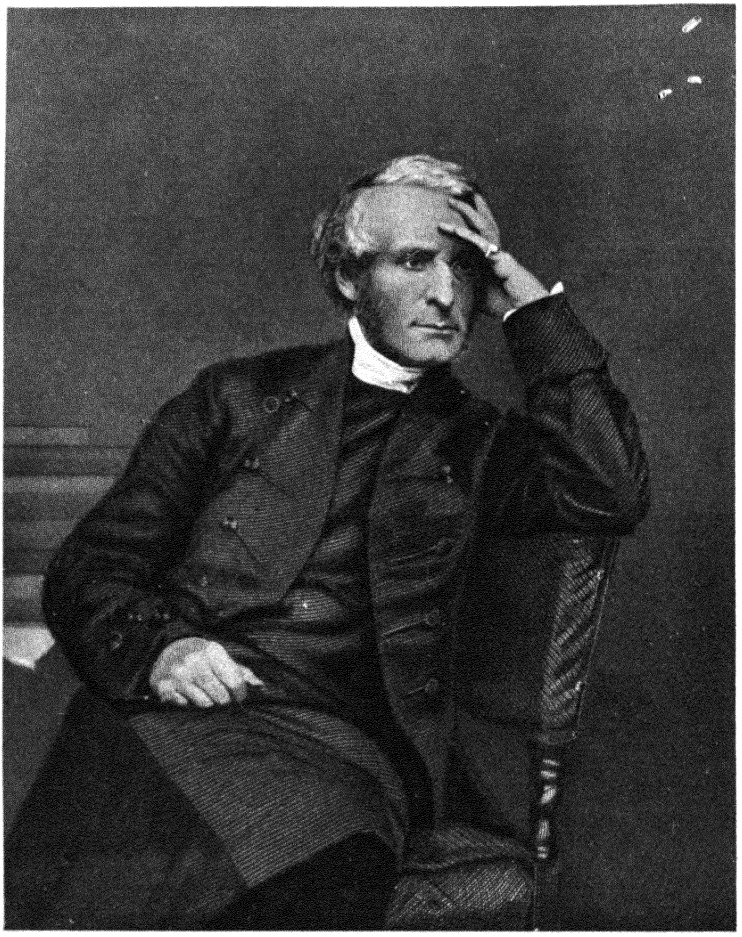
25. On the grapeshot of the 'Essays and Reviews' followed, in 1862, the bombshell of Bishop Colenso's first volume on 'The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined.' That work, which Maurice feverishly denounced on the score that historical untruth had nothing to do with religious truth, and Arnold professed to regard as a piece of trivial polemic, characteristic of the pettifogging English mind, proved to be the starting-point of a new advance in Biblical criticism which was later to make Arnold's literary Bibliolatry miss its mark. And again the furious hostility of the clerical press and the Houses of Convocation did but reveal to intelligent onlookers the impotence of authoritarianism. Colenso was open to fair criticism for his official action, which suggested quaint notions of episcopal duty;[1] but he was in general vilified less for irregularity of action than for telling what was not denied to be the plain truth.

The effect of his careful documentary demonstration was to reveal to plain men everywhere, as well as to theological experts in Holland and Germany, that a large block of accepted sacred history simply *could not be true*. The further fact that a thoroughly good bishop had learned as much from the spontaneous common-sense criticism of a Zulu semi-convert, who happened to see what Voltaire had seen a century before, conveyed the additional shock of a surmise that freethinkers had after all been talking sense and churchmen nonsense. Colenso was in fact more destructive to the common hold of orthodoxy than the *Essays and Reviews* had been, and may be said to have led many souls to Darwin. In 1862, Huxley's thesis as to man's origin had been piously vituperated as "an anti-scriptural and debasing theory.....in blasphemous contradiction to Biblical narrative and doctrine." After Colenso, such curses fell flat. The visible quixotic goodness of the Bishop's character, which moved Stanley to defy for him the wrath of the embattled priesthood,[2] completed the impression. Only in sheer numbers and social prestige could orthodoxy be said henceforth to preponderate.

26. And it was clear that forms of unbelief now largely pervaded the intelligent clergy. Colenso saw no more reason for leaving the Church than did Arnold and Maurice and the "Seven against Scripture" in *Essays and Reviews*. The private criticism and derision of clerical prevarication and make-believe—a criticism to which Colenso had given a strong and

[1] A narrative and criticism from the Church point of view may be read in *The Student's English Church History*, by Canon G. G. Perry, 1887, vol. iii, ch. xxi.

[2] *Recollections of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley*, by Dean Bradley, 1883, p. 110.



JOHN WILLIAM COLENSO, D.D.
Bishop of Natal

serious lead[1]—multiplied among the educated classes as they had long been doing among the intelligent working-classes. Writing in 1856, in his *English Traits*, after a prelude of elevated commonplace about historic religion, Emerson in his vivid way had flashed the judgment that

> The torpidity, on the side of religion, of the vigorous English understanding shows how much wit and folly can agree in one brain. Their religion is a quotation; their church is a doll; and any examination is interdicted with screams of terror. In good company you expect them to laugh at the fanaticism of the vulgar; but they do not; they are the vulgar.[2]

Emerson aiding, that state of things was being uneasily modified in the 'sixties. Even in 1856, he had also written :—

> The church at this moment is much to be pitied. She has nothing left but possession. If a Bishop meets an intelligent gentleman, and reads fatal interrogations in his eyes, he has no resource but to take wine with him. False position introduces cant, perjury, simony, *and ever a lower class of mind and character*,[3] into the clergy; and when the hierarchy is afraid of science and education, afraid of piety, afraid of tradition, and afraid of theology, there is nothing left but to quit a church which is no longer one.[4]

But that was precisely what was not to be done by the correct clerisy. Emerson's concluding remarks are mystically vacuous, evading the facts of life to propound the kind of "poetic" generalizations with which he solved problems, for America as for England. In England, "the" Church was to continue as a "going concern," with revenues and social functions, as in America the churches, having also "nothing left but possession," were to go on sedulously exploiting ignorance to similar ends. It was the intellectual atmosphere, the balance of intelligent opinion, that was to be transmuted. "Possession" remained, with ever dimmer prestige, maintaining an apparatus of "Christian Evidences," devotional rhapsody, false history, false criticism, and vociferous platitude. But the whole "idolatrous work," as Arnold called it, was nevertheless crumbling within before "the unimaginable touch of Time."

27. The very violence of the resistance to every omen of change quickened the process. When men began newly to realize that the "spirit of religion," so often acclaimed as the sanctification of life and the fountain of humility, was in reality an ever-burning furnace of malice, their questionings went deeper. It was nothing new to note the arrogant priest "whose reddening cheek no contradiction bears," but the advance of research was revealing more general forces than that. It was becoming clear that almost in the ratio of the energy of the "sense of God" among the pious, they were at once blind to every gleam of testable new truth

[1] *The Pentateuch*, vol. ii, pref. p. xxvii. [2] *English Traits*, ch. xiii, *Religion*.

[3] This was borne out, as to "mind," by Colenso's notation of the fact that whereas in 1841 there were only thirty-eight of the inferior class of clerical candidates called "literates," in 1861 there were 241. *The Pentateuch*, vol. ii, 1863, pref. pp. x, xi.

[4] *English Traits*, end of ch. xiii.

in every direction, and furious at the light-finders. Claiming a super-normal percipience of "divine law," they spontaneously execrated every explorer who by patient toil attained to the correction of any traditionary error, large or small. Piety and truth seemed to be counter-forces : love of God and love of Bible joined Maurice and Arnold in an angry grimace at Colenso, the soul of rectitude, putting them so far at one with the godly multitude who cursed alike Colenso and Darwin.

Steadily the evolution went on. In 1863 appeared Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, written with an amenity and charm that disarmed all save the earnestly religious, who now had to undergo a new exasperation. To-day, probably, the bulk of the instructed clergy of the Church of England stand very much where Renan did : their predecessors mostly abhorred him. After the reception of *Essays and Reviews* and of Colenso on the Pentateuch, it began to seem as if to be execrated by the pious was a warrant that the victim was more or less largely right. Anglican religion in those days was revealed as in great measure something worse than Emerson said it was. The prosecutions of Rowland Williams and H. B. Wilson for their share in the *Essays*—Baden Powell being removed by death—were so foolish in their exhibition of impotent malice that a large majority of the Bishops were against them ; and when the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council decided in favour of the appellants, the orthodox clergy made matters worse. On the call of Dr. Pusey—who had himself been "suspended" for three years in his youth for "papistical" heresy about the Eucharist—eleven thousand Anglican clergymen signed a pious declaration of absolute belief in eternal punishments and plenary inspiration. But they were only the half of the host as to numbers, and much less as to intelligence. For cynical onlookers, the clergy were now divisible into "sheep and goats," in a newly unamiable definition. Later came the labelling of the High, the Broad, and the Low Church sections as "The Attitudinarian, the Latitudinarian, and the Platitudinarian."

28. And still the disintegration went on. In 1864 there appeared the somewhat surprising phenomenon of a bulky prize essay entitled 'The Prophet of Nazareth,' on the theme of New Testament eschatology, of which the argument develops into a deistic attack on the central Christian dogma and on gospel ethics. This was the work of Evan Powell Meredith, who had been a Baptist minister in Wales. Its research was at many points challenging ; but it was on the whole prudently ignored in favour of a more facile performance. In 1865 appeared the anonymous *Ecce Homo*, in later years known to be the work of John Robert Seeley (1834–95), Professor of Latin at University College, London, later (1869) of History at Cambridge. Seeley's book was in its degree an English "hit" in the way of Renan's, and should have been cited as such by Arnold. Assuming without discussion or definition the Neo-Unitarian standpoint, it proceeded with strenuous unction to develop a generalized gospel of philanthropy, making Jesus its type and exponent, and putting

in circulation the concept of "Enthusiasm of Humanity." For those who wanted to know with any definiteness how the historic Jesus was expiscated from the creed and the records there was nothing. The author premised that "No theological questions whatever are here discussed," promising that they should be in another volume, which never appeared. But for many the book long served as a warm chamber in which critical problems were dissolved in a glow of philanthropy, and the dogmatic Christ appeared as the incarnate spirit of humanitarianism pure and simple.

Piety, nevertheless, at once supplied another classification. "The worst book ever vomited from the jaws of hell" was the judicial pronouncement of the Earl of Shaftesbury. That must have helped it with the new generation ; and it is significant that Gladstone, who had recoiled from Renan, was moved to write with little reserve in vindication of *Ecce Homo*.[1] It made the full rhapsodic appeal to one who was always half a rhapsode. In Seeley's book, the question of historic truth disappeared under the steam-cloud of rhetoric ; but the eloquent insistence on the efficacy of Christ and Christianity as an instrument for the transformation of innately bad men into good[2] appealed to one of his strongest practical yearnings. Where other men, oppressed by the vision of the contrary historic process, in which piety was seen as turning comparatively good men into bad, regarded with a sombre derision Seeley's announcement[3] that "The enthusiasm of humanity in Christians is not only their supreme but their only law," Gladstone responded with generous emotion, and the favourite catchword recurred late in his political speeches. By his unwitting help, the book acted as a partial solvent of his own dogmatic creed.

Seeley's treatise has long ceased to evoke from real students any serious praise. Its success was one of unction and declamation, and it did nothing for historic thought. It is told of the famous Master of Trinity College, Dr. W. H. Thompson (1810–86), that after hearing Seeley's inaugural address from the History Chair he observed that he had not thought we should so soon regret "our poor friend Kingsley," Seeley's unlucky predecessor in rhapsodic historiography. It was later remarked that the preacher of universal philanthropy won his next success by a gospel of quite unethical imperialism—*The Expansion of England* (1883). The large element of flatly false history in that performance may have partly provoked the study which led to the verdict that even the *Life of Stein* (1878), supposed to be Seeley's one solid performance, is as untrustworthy as the others. His *Natural Religion* will be noticed later.

29. Meantime a powerful contribution to popular rationalist culture had been made in the 'History of the Intellectual Development of

[1] Articles in *Good Words*, published in book form, 1868. Gladstone testifies that no anonymous book since the *Vestiges of Creation* had attracted anything like the amount of notice and criticism bestowed on *Ecce Homo*.

[2] Work cited, 3rd ed. p. 98.

[3] *Id.* p. 192.

Europe' by the Anglo-American physiologist, Dr. John William Draper[1] (1811–82), published at New York in 1862 and at London in 1864. Draper had previously been known as author of a 'Human Physiology' (1st ed. 1856; 7th ed. N. Y. 1873), and in England as reader of a paper at the British Association in 1860, presenting an abstract of the physiological argument as to the mental progress of Europe which is embodied in the *Development*. The book had been first completed in 1858, whereafter it was condensed for publication. In 1862 he left untouched what he had written on several scientific questions, including that of the origin of species, having reached his advanced views on the subject in 1856. But the 'Intellectual Development' is substantially an evolutionary view of social and mental progress, starting with the postulate of "the Government of Nature by Law," and the uncompromising claim that "the equilibrium and movement of humanity are altogether physiological phenomena"[2]—a thesis not exactly sustained in the sequel.

Draper makes no mention of Buckle, and doubtless he reached his views independently on the historical as on the physiological side. His anthropology, in the revised edition of 1875, remains pre-Spencerian and pre-Tylorian, positing a primordial animistic monotheism. But, though he writes as a theist, he is insistently naturalistic in his whole survey. The great success of his book was due alike to its emphatic clearness of view and doctrine and its capturing force of diction. He was master of an effective platform style, a skilful mixture of Macaulay and Bancroft (the "American panegyrical historian" at whom Sir Henry Maine later gnashed his teeth), governed by a rhetorical gift that was his own. And when he comes to the period at which he was specially to clash with Christian orthodox historical sentiment, the age of transition from the rule of Christian faith to the rule of knowledge, he is very definitely anti-theological, anti-ecclesiastical, anti-evangelical.

The value of the book for its age lay in the broadly massed pictures of historical change—pictures certainly painted with a large brush, panoramic to a degree, but always effectively dominated by the concept of evolutionary causation. It was essentially a freethinker's book, for freethinkers, and it is a curious circumstance that this very aggressive treatise has gone on its way and done its work, translated into many languages, sold in the ordinary way of bookselling during sixty odd years, without any noticeable polemical notoriety, while Buckle, equally theistic, was for a generation the target of theistic and other adversaries. Draper entirely dispensed with notes, and may so have been reckoned beneath scholastic notice, being indeed not infrequently inaccurate, though he must have been an omnivorous reader of history. But he

[1] Born near Liverpool; studied at the University of London; went to America in 1832; became Professor of Chemistry at New York, 1837, and remained so till 1881. Draper's early work in scientific photography and micrography seems to have been original and important.

[2] Bell's ed. 1875, i, 2.

certainly made his mark over a wide area; and when he produced in 1874 his 'History of the Conflict between Religion and Science' he repeated his first success of popularity on a great scale and to great effect.

30. Amid the outcry over Colenso and Renan and Seeley there seems to have been little breath left for anathemas against the work of W. Watkiss Lloyd (1813–93), 'Christianity in the Cartoons' (1865: privately issued 1863). In that curious treatise the method and aim of Strauss are tranquilly but persistently applied to the gospel history, on the text and pretext of the cartoons in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican. Lloyd was first an archæologist and a man of letters,[1] and at an earlier date his incursion into criticism of the gospel story might have cost him much odium. In his 'Advertisement' he explains that his coincidences with Strauss's second (1864) Life of Jesus—"that noble book"—are not due to borrowing, Lloyd's having actually been in the hands of Strauss some weeks before the issue of his own. "His cordial recognition of it," adds Lloyd, "I value in the place of any decoration." How many readers were secured for Straussian argument embedded in an illustrated work on the Sistine Cartoons is matter for dubious speculation. The book was never reprinted.

Lloyd was indeed well qualified to apply the myth-test independently, in the light of both Strauss and Baur; and many of his suggestions as to the motivation of gospel stories are still well worth study. His prefatory query, "When we have utterly and heartily given up whatever in the New Testament is fairly convicted as unhistorical, what facts remain for us unimpeached after all the questioning?", has to-day an ironical air in the face of his further phrase, "which have thus come thrice tried through the fire." That furnace has since been seven times heated.

31. The time was now ripe for a bland acceptance of the 'History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe' (1865), by W. E. H. Lecky (1838–1903). With him we are still in the age of rhetoric; and his introduction is a memorable turmoil of voluble self-contradiction and confident divagation, logical and psychological. Clerical training and what may be regarded as Hibernian habit[2] had created in him a temper of complacent certitude, on wholly unconsidered complexities of statement, which approximates to burlesque. George Eliot's pungent criticism of him as one of the writers who have "enough of vagueness and vacillation in their theory to win them ready acceptance from a mixed audience" was not at all overstrained. It was that facile incoherence that disarmed the average British reader, and carried him away on the author's fluent tide of declamation.

[1] Lloyd supplied the introductions to the plays of Shakespeare in the 10-vol. edition by Singer.

[2] Lecky had written anonymously on *The Religious Tendencies of the Age* in 1860, and on *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland* in 1861.

But Lecky, as he was to prove to some purpose later in his 'History of England in the Eighteenth Century' (1878–90), had in him much of the outfit of a historian, and his collation of historical and literary facts in the *Rationalism* was as instructive as his commentary was otherwise. A hard reader, he massed many little known and little considered facts. Withal, he was rhetorically respectful to religious sentiment, duly disrespectful to deists, and never too much of a rationalist to cause alarm on fundamentals. So the *Rationalism* found entrance into drawing-rooms and parsonages where Buckle was eyed askance, though Lecky paid to Buckle warm if brief tribute. Thus he was an educator of young freethinkers, especially when he forced them to analyse his didactic confusions and check his looser assertions. The success of such a book was the proof of a change in the intellectual climate, and helped to promote the change.

Lecky's next work, the 'History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne' (1869), exhibited the same merits of wide reading and inadequate thinking, with small measure of acquired sobriety of style, and never enough for philosophic ends. He could not divest himself of the rhetorical afflatus, the habit of tumidity. The opening chapter on 'The Natural History of Morals' moved to mordant criticism students who took moral philosophy seriously, and in the third edition (1877) he struck out some offensive passages and added some explanations; but the book remains vitally imperfect as a study and history of ethics. As in the previous book, the service done is that of collation of material, and this on a popular rather than on a scholarly plane. Yet it was educative; and though to the last Lecky never suspected his own intellectual inadequacies, while strongly convinced of the deficiencies of others, he tended to enlarge the general outlook of his time among the English-reading peoples. A turn for the sentimental furthered his vogue.

32. More radical criticism was now being carried on in other fields. One of Lecky's characteristically "safe" remarks had been that "in the eyes both of the philanthropist and the philosopher the greatest of all results," in the moral "or perhaps any other field," were, he conceived, "to be looked for in the study of the relations between our physical and our moral natures"! The task thus cautiously hinted at had been taken up by Dr. Henry Maudsley in his 'Physiology and Pathology of the Mind' (1867), the first of a series of studies all marked by an unflinching rationalism of temper and method. A second edition appeared in the following year; and when in 1876 the first part of the work was recast as 'The Physiology of Mind,' rewritten, some provocative passages were modified. But the author could say that "the physiological method has made such great way that it stands not now in need of defence or advocacy." Rational science in England was thus invading the "spiritual" field in the temper of the French experts of the beginning of the century, facing all the problems of mental life which spiritual philosophy

had helplessly evaded from the first, and doing it with a new precision as well as with a renewed enthusiasm.

33. Equally radical in its field was the 'Commentary on Leviticus' of Dr. Meritz Marcus Kalisch (1828–85), a Jewish scholar from Germany, who had found refuge in England like so many others when compromised in the revolutionary movement of 1848. His earlier volumes on Exodus (1855) and Genesis (1858) had attracted attention by their scholarship, but not by any innovation in critical doctrine, the *Exodus* being in fact "orthodox and conservative," though the *Genesis* moved in a critical direction.[1] But the Commentary on Leviticus (1867–72) told definitely of the new critical developments that were proceeding among the Hebraists of the Continent. What Colenso had done for the pseudo-history, Kalisch did for the Levitical forgery, demonstrating it to be a later work than Deuteronomy, and analysing its matter in a fashion that forced on students the recognition of the barbarism of Hebrew religion. Kuenen remarked on the "vigour and independence" of Kalisch's treatise. As a whole, it remains a solid element in the Biblical criticism of the age.

Thus for thirty years an almost incessant criticism had been assailing at all points the traditional creed, exposing its untruths of history, its anomalies of ethic, and its baselessness in philosophy. The attack had been at every point superior to the defence, and the cumulative effect in promoting critical unbelief was soon to be put out of doubt by the perturbed avowals of serious and responsible defenders of the faith. Already, in fact, such avowals had been made by the most earnest of the theologians who still held it. Maurice had declared that the unbelief of his time was "more deep and more widely spread than those who complain of the *Essays and Reviews* have any notion."[2] In the next decade the knowledge was to be common property, even among the priesthood.

34. The seventh decade may be said to close on the note of the title of *The Earthward Pilgrimage* of Moncure Daniel Conway, with its motto from Confucius, "Respect the Gods, but keep them at a distance." That American pilgrim had set out as a strict Methodist in Virginia, passed to Unitarianism under the sway rather of Emerson than of Parker, and had then, in England, as preacher at a Unitarian chapel, moved to a point at which he had dismissed even the theism of W. J. Fox, and abandoned prayers and sacraments. A common resort against all new religious philosophy had been the plea that it could appeal only to the select few—whatever might be achieved among the multitude by atheistic Secularism. But here was a non-theistic teaching which appealed to the serious educated class who did not dwell in metaphysic, the very kind of people whom Maurice wanted to fill the Church of England. They too had made the earthward pilgrimage, caring more for goodness

[1] Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 1893, p. 206.
[2] C. F. G. Masterman, *F. D. Maurice*, 1907, p. 178.

and righteousness every mile of the way, being led by a true and brave man.

35. How pervading and how decisive was the attitude of dismissal to religion at that stage is further to be gathered from an unpretending little book issued in the same year with Conway's, 'Revealed Religion: Its Claims on the Intellect and on the Heart impartially discussed in a series of Letters from a Father to his Son, By a Wrangler and ex-Member of the University of Cambridge.' Here there is no parade of scholarship, and indeed no apparatus of debate: only the straightforward reasoned statement of his convictions by an educated and well-read man, long convinced of the moral and intellectual nullity of the current creed, and setting it forth in all the main aspects of the case. In him there are no velleities of faith, no nostalgias or atavisms such as had been haunting the generation of Clough and the young Arnold. His mind had ostensibly been formed in the age of reaction, before Darwin, by close critical attention to all the pleas and counterpleas; and he remains alert on every issue. His little book is a reflection of the all-round rationalism already reached by the steady students of the old debate, and competently passed on by many to the combatants of the new.

36. In the chequered history of modern religious thought, the writings of the Rev. S. Baring-Gould (1834–1924) should not pass unnoticed. In 1869–70 appeared his two volumes on 'The Origin and Development of Religious Belief,' in which the positions of biological and anthropological science are cordially adopted as bases for a syncretic restatement of the claims of Christianity. No other clerical writer, probably, has made his confession, "that to Feuerbach I owe a debt of inestimable gratitude. Feeling about, in uncertainty, for the ground, and finding everywhere shifting sands, Feuerbach cast a sudden blaze into the darkness and disclosed to me the way."[1] The syntax is symptomatic of the author's reasoning; but there is no doubt as to his cheerful belief that the atheistic philosophy of Feuerbach, for whom all religious concepts are but the expression of desires, supplies a solid ground whereon can be re-erected a quasi-rationalistic Christianity, in which the dogmas of Incarnation, Resurrection, Atonement, and sacramental communion are shown to be irresistible deductions from the premiss that man invents his religion from the start. A "must" bridges every hiatus.

The book proves nothing save the capacity of an ecclesiastic, "dissatisfied with the evidences commonly alleged for Christianity," to construct a tissue of words which shall seem to prove that his official religion, restated in terms of general hierology, embodies all the "truths" of all previous religions, with new and decisive truths of its own. The cloud-builder, oddly, has a historic sense; but not otherwise any sense of logic. There is no trace of his having created a "school," though a

[1] Pref. to vol. ii in ed. 1882.

later English clerical practitioner adopted his method. On the contrary, despite all his facile neo-dogmatism, despite his Athanasian pronouncement[1] that "Moral authority is exercised *in foro conscientiæ* alone. It derives from God. It is the action of God upon the conscience of man," he was summarily rejected by orthodoxy. "The Roman *Catholic World*, the high Anglican *Church Review*, and the extreme Protestant press and *St. James's Chronicle*," he tells us, "have agreed to denounce me as a gross materialist, a thorough rationalist, and an undisguised infidel."[2] He was indeed the oddest adjunct of the Anglo-Catholic movement, which he handsomely certificated by affirming that "Catholicism is the fusion into one of all religions."[3]

His later work (1874) on 'The Lost and Hostile Gospels: An Essay on the Toledoth Jeschu,[4] and the Petrine and Pauline gospels of the first three centuries of which fragments remain,' exhibits the same perfect readiness to recognize the tenuity of the historical case for Christianity, with the same facility in adhering to the Catholic creed. As in the previous book he built on Feuerbach, here he builds on Baur, with a clear recognition of the primary strife between the Judaizing and the Gentilizing factions of the early Church. Again the historic sense works freely, up to the point of dogmatic presupposition. "Criticism," he avows in his preface, "has put a lens to our eyes, and disclosed to us on the shining remote face of primitive Christianity rents and craters undreamt of in our old simplicity." And he, who had reconstructed his official faith by a procedure of pseudo-philosophic mysticism, declares that "the mystic always regards his unregulated wishes as divine revelations, his random impulses as heavenly inspirations.....So well is this fact known in the Roman Church, that a mystic is inexorably shut up in a convent, or cast out as a heretic."

All the same, the Incarnation is for this thinker a fact because of its "marvellous aptitude to human nature." The outcome is that out of the chaos of early Christian fictions and egoisms the Church, putting everything to rights, has constructed divine truth; but that still we ought to face the historic facts. It would be broadly accurate to say that Mr. Baring-Gould, by his various reading and his vivid exposition, supplied students, freethinkers in particular, with much interesting and useful information, which really promoted rationalism in the teeth of his own dogmatics, while yielding a precarious comfort to pious eccentrics. His later success as a novelist was held by some to be the fitting crown to his literary labours.

[1] Vol. ii, p. 82. [2] *Id.* pref. p. xi *note*. [3] *Id.* p. 158.
[4] The ancient Jewish anti-Jesuine narrative current in the time of Origen, and later manipulated.

Chapter X

EUROPEAN LITERATURE

§ 1

This chapter is not a study of arguments and opinions as such, but a bird's-eye view of the literary signs of the changing thought of the century. Such a survey belongs to the attempt to realize the total evolution, and may help to illustrate European ground apart from direct study of opinion. In the eighteenth century, freethought in France and England had been promoted not only by philosophic and critical discussion but by the tone of literature in general, and we have seen how in the period of reaction the revival had in England many literary aspects. The same tendency now inevitably operated on the Continent. Byron figured there as a freethinking force in a greater degree than in his own country. And whereas there could not arise in Italy the play of anti-clericalism seen in France even under the Restoration, the prose and poetry of Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837) set up a deeper intellectual influence than Byron's. Leopardi was soon a classic.

1. That astonishingly gifted poet never attempted any propaganda against orthodox beliefs, which he knew to be confined mainly to levels of mind where he had no desire to act; but his whole output in *belles lettres* is visibly that of an unbeliever in the current creed, as was distressfully recognized by Gladstone, one of his earlier English admirers.[1] What Gladstone saw in Leopardi's thought was fully recognized by Italians, who hailed in him the representative of mind, liberty, nationality, in virtue at once of his genius and of his detachment from all things ecclesiastical.[2] His pessimism did not as a rule depress his admirers, youth being wont to relish pessimism of fine literary quality without sharing it. We shall thus find *belles lettres* in general, and historical writing in particular, at once a cause and an effect, a symptom and a generator, of the movement of thought athwart or away from traditionary beliefs.

2. On the other hand, Italian belief and unbelief remained largely pre-determined either by philosophic habit or by temperamental clericalism or anti-clericalism. There was a long and brilliant series of philosophic and critical writers, led by Giuseppe Ferrari (1811–76),

[1] Art. on "Giacomo Leopardi," in *Quarterly Review*, March, 1850, rep. in *Gleanings of Past Years*, ii, 115.

[2] The gross figment of a Jesuit, who alleged that Leopardi recanted, and returned to orthodoxy, was fully exposed by Gioberti, as cited by Gladstone, *Gleanings*, ii, 110 *sq.*

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who edited Vico, and wrote on 'Vico and Italy' (1839), making that famous name a war-cry for nationalism, and was in consequence duly exiled, becoming a colleague of Proudhon at Paris. But of concrete debate on Christian history such as went on elsewhere there was virtually none; and the literature favoured by the freethinkers, like that preferred by the faithful, was rather symbolic of attitude than in itself propagandist. Leopardi seems to have reached quite swiftly, at nineteen, a complete disbelief in the creed which he had hitherto docilely followed,[1] and remained thereafter unmoved by any solicitations of faith.[2]

The then more famous Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873), who produced "the one great Italian novel," *I Promessi Sposi* (1827), reversed the process. At twenty, he with his mother met in Paris the survivors of the school of the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, and Manzoni "soon lost any little religious faith he had brought with him from home."[3] Five years later, having married an English Protestant lady, who became converted to Catholicism, he went in distress to a Catholic church and "prayed to God to reveal Himself to him, if He existed. He left the church a confirmed though not a bigoted (!) Catholic, and remained so for the rest of his days."[4]

Such a mind was fitted to proceed in harmony with its surroundings; and Manzoni in his carefully schemed and studied novel proceeded to "group once more round religion the great noble human feelings to which," he held, "it naturally gave rise." His novel sedulously inculcated resignation to the divine will, and was thus fitted, with its high literary merit, to become a European success. The patriots, mostly liberals, cared little for the doctrine of resignation, and less for Manzoni's religious hymns, though his better poetry added to his fame. On the whole, he contributed to the retardation—which was probably useful—of the "Risorgimento," in which we find Mazzini a theist, with a doctrine of universal brotherhood, and Garibaldi an unbeliever. Save insofar as Italians read—as many of course did—the critical writers of other countries on religious problems, they had then no such literature of debate on those themes as was developing opinion elsewhere. Pietists remained clericals, and educated laymen freethinkers, on the previous general grounds.

3. In Giosué Carducci (1836–1907), the greatest Italian poet since Leopardi, we seem to find the natural outcome. As scholar and as poet, he was not propagandist; but in his *Juvenilia* (1857) we have the fierce young anti-clerical indicting, in the sonnet 'Voice of the Priests,' the

[1] L. Collison-Morley, *Modern Italian Literature*, 1911, p. 215. Cp. Aulard, *Essai* prefixed to his translation, *Poésies et œuvres morales de Leopardi*, 1880, i, 40–51, and his section, p. 53 *sq.*, on the early *Suggio sopra gli errori*.

[2] Gladstone comments on the "anile imbecility" of the pietism of Leopardi's father, which would naturally be a factor in the son's rationalism.

[3] Collison-Morley, p. 181.

[4] *Id.* p. 183.

treachery of the Church to freedom and truth, while in another, 'Voice of God,' the people are summoned to union at the call of deity, who is besought to restore the spirit of Savonarola. Later, the famous ode *To Satan* (1863–5) expresses at once pantheism, anti-papalism, anti-theology, and republicanism, in a verse not surpassed for power even in the resonant poetry of Italy. At last a poetic voice had been provided for Italian freethought. The ode, which evoked much wrath, needed some apologies, but remains a classic. That Carducci was a professor, deeply and accurately learned, and, with all his paganism, ethically sane and hostile to all forms of corruption, served to make him one of the healthiest Italian forces of his age.

§ 2

1. While Chateaubriand was the pre-eminent figure in French *belles-lettres*, it could not be said that literature exhibited the revival of free-thought against the reaction of the Restoration. For a time, the balance lay the other way. Lamartine (1790–1869), who was to bring a new inspiration of rhythm and feeling into French verse, was bred an ultra-royalist, and made his *début* with his *Méditations poétiques et religieuses* (1820), followed (1830) by his *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*. Nor did he ever, through all his democratic and republican developments, cease to be on the religious side of things; though he seems to have been a bad Catholic, capable of speaking of the Mass as the "panification of God." On the other hand, Alfred de Vigny (1797–1863) was just as definitely non-religious; and though he had not Lamartine's capturing charm his best work is no less enduring than the other's.[1] Victor Hugo, again, was always a theist, but never a Christian; and his squib, 'Christ at the Vatican' (1875), might have been signed by Voltaire, to whom, later, Hugo was to pay a homage worthy of both.

2. It was naturally on the prose side that the critical spirit first asserted itself. The most distinguished French writer of the time, apart from the poets and novelists—if we except the strenuous Guizot—was Jules Michelet (1798–1874), whose great History of France was appearing in sections. No writer had hitherto aroused such a living interest in the national past. Here was an imagination abreast of anything in the new romantic movement, alive to the pageant of history with an intensity of knowledge impossible to Chateaubriand, using the instrument of a style vivified by constant intension of feeling. If the historiographic result was at points imperfectly scientific, especially where the patriotic bias was allowed full play, it remains true on the other hand that Michelet's vivid realization of states of mind in the past gave a new reality to history, and prepared men of the modern school of rigorous documentists to grasp more clearly the meaning of their documents.[2] While, however, this

[1] Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, éd. 1898, pp. 942–4.

[2] Such testimony has been borne to Michelet by Professor Seignobos.

impression was still to be made, the historian was carrying with him the national consciousness in a new sense of unity, deeper and greater than the mere military pride evoked by Napoleon.

And yet Michelet was a mere heretic in the eyes of the faithful, Émile Saisset describing his book *Du Prêtre, de la Femme, et de la Famille* (1845), as a "renaissance of Voltaireanism."[1] His whole brilliant History, indeed, is from beginning to end rationalistic, challenging as it does all the decorous traditions, exposing the failure of the faith to civilize, pronouncing that "the monastic Middle Age is an age of idiots" and the scholastic world which followed it an age of artificially formed fools,[2] flouting dogma and discrediting creed over each of their miscarriages.[3] The tone of his private letters is strongly anti-clerical, and with good reason, in face of the bitter intolerance of the French clergy in the period. At the close, he writes in his journal that in *La Sorcière* he has proclaimed "the provisional death of Christianity. Some sides of the Christian mind will revive. Meantime it is necessary that it should die and expiate."[4] And he was popular, withal, not only because of his vividness and unfailing freshness, but because his convictions were those of the best intelligences around him.

3. In the poetry and fiction of the Second Empire, the predominance of one or other shade of freethinking is perceptible. Béranger (1780–1857), now grown the more venerable for most French folk who lived the life of the mind because he had rejected the advances of Napoleon III, had been so far from pietism that the young and unemancipated Renan had austerely chidden him. Passing as a simple Voltairean, he did indeed claim to have "saved from the wreck an indestructible belief,"[5] but this was simply his deism—an emotional religion in its own way—and his faith in a future life.[6] The alleged "confession" of Béranger on his death-bed was a Catholic fraud of the usual kind. Théophile Gautier (1811–72), on the other hand, was definitely an *impie*.[7]

Lamartine, certainly, goes to the side of theism; but Alfred de Musset,

[1] *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845, p. 193.

[2] *Histoire*, tom. vii, *Renaissance*, introd. § 6.

[3] M. Faguet writes (*Études sur le xix^e Siècle*, p. 352) that "Michelet croit à l'âme plus qu'à Dieu, encore que profondément déiste. Les théories philosophiques modernes lui étaient pénibles." This may be true, though hardly any evidence is offered on the latter head; but when M. Faguet writes, "Est-il chrétien? Je n'en sais rien.....mais il sympathise avec la pensée chrétienne," he seems to ignore the preface to the later editions of the *Histoire de la révolution française*. To pronounce Christianity, as Michelet there does, essentially anti-democratic, and therefore hostile to the Revolution, was, for him, to condemn it. His letters are decisive.

[4] G. Monod, *Jules Michelet*, 1908, p. 383. Cp. p. 375.

[5] Letter to Sainte-Beuve, cited by Levallois, *Sainte-Beuve*, 1872, p. 14.

[6] See the whole matter discussed by Paul Boiteau, a sentimental deist, in his *Appendice* to Béranger's *Ma Biographie*, 1858, p. 259; his brochure, *Erreurs des critiques de Béranger*; and his *Philosophie politique de Béranger*, 1859, pp. 36–55.

[7] See his *Une Larme de Diable: Mystère*.

the most inspired of *décadents*, was no more Christian than Heine, save for what an eminent critic has called "la banale religiosité de *l'Espoir en Dieu*";[1] and the pessimist Baudelaire had not even that to show. De Musset's absurd attack on Voltaire in his Byronic poem, *Rolla*, well deserves the same epithets. It is a mere product of hysteria, representing neither knowledge nor reflection. The grandiose theism of Victor Hugo, again, is stamped only with his own image and superscription; and it was one of the misfortunes of the Emperor to have made of him an implacable enemy, wholly intractable to the purposes of the Church. Self-exiled, he was a beacon of menace to the whole imperial system; and the Church never made a pretence of claiming him. It wanted, not theists, but Catholics. Nor had it luck otherwise among the poets. In Hugo's distinguished contemporary Leconte de Lisle we have one of the most convinced and aggressive freethinkers of the century, a fine scholar and a self-controlled pessimist, who felt it well worth his while to write a little 'Popular History of Christianity' (1871) which would have delighted d'Holbach.

4. France, in fact, could hardly be said to have one distinguished Christian prose writer after (*a*) Chateaubriand, who was not really orthodox, (*b*) Lamennais, who was driven out of the Church, and (*c*) Edgar Quinet, who was anti-clerical, and joined Michelet in writing his book on 'The Priest, the Woman, and the Family.' French fiction became markedly naturalistic. Balzac, who grew up in the age of reaction, makes essentially for rationalism by his perpetual corrosive analysis; and after him the difficulty is to find a great French novelist who is not frankly rationalistic. George Sand will probably not be claimed by orthodoxy; and Beyle, Flaubert, Mérimée, Zola, Daudet, Maupassant, and the De Goncourts make a list of unbelievers against which can be set only the names of M. Bourget, an artist of the second order, and of the distinguished *décadent* Huysmans, who became a Trappist after a life marked by a philosophy and practice of an extremely different complexion.

Balzac (1799–1850), despite his praises of Catholicism and his trick of religious platitude,[2] can have given small comfort to orthodoxy even in his early stories, which include the *Episode sous la Terreur* (1831), wherein the motive of faith is so skilfully exploited. In that entitled *Jésus-Christ en Flandre* (1831)—a legend of miracle rounded with a vision ending on the sardonic formula: "To believe, I tell myself, is to live! I have seen the funeral of a monarchy: we must defend the Church!"—there is inserted the phrase: "Will, the only thing in man that resembles what the learned call a soul." In another striking story, 'The Atheist's Mass'

[1] Lanson, *Hist. de la littérature française*, p. 951.

[2] For instance: "When the wretched have convicted society of falsehood, they throw themselves more eagerly on the bosom of God."—*Le Colonel Chabert.* It is not to be denied that in Balzac the charlatan dogs the genius. But the charlatanism is always naïve.

(1836), the perfect equality of sympathy given to the atheist and the good believer is eloquent of the passing of faith. For the rest, Balzac's pitiless portraits of evil priests, though they have no more of doctrinary malice than his studies of evil women, give no help to the cause of the Church. Balzac's achievement, in sum, with all his artistic flaws, is to raise the novel to a new austerity of criticism of life ; and if there is an overcharge of pessimism in his picture of a world mainly consisting of the selfish, the callous, the base, the false, the envious, and the brutal, who serve as foils to the small percentage of the vitally good, it is nonetheless arresting. He has invigorated all later fiction, from Thackeray onwards.

George Sand (1804–76) may be said in a special degree to embody in herself the storm and stress of the France of her youth and middle age. Beginning as a *révoltée*, she turned her back completely on all the theology she had been taught in her convent, finding it both odious and illogical ; and after her period of emotional tempests she reached a pantheism which was not particularly logical, but which lent itself successfully to the new humanitarianism which was the strongest aspiration of her own personality.[1] She was thus quite alien to the Church, and all the more congenial to her age and country as she left it. In her there really was the faculty for love which she so liberally ascribed to her nation. In the male novelists we have the fitting complement to her cordial enthusiasm.

Flaubert (1821–80), we know, was a thoroughgoing rationalist, despite his admiration for the style of Chateaubriand, as to which his friends Tourguénief and Zola desolated him by refusing to acquiesce. For Spinoza he had an immense admiration ;[2] and though Renan was his friend he gave prompt precedence to Strauss's Life of Jesus over Renan's, for its critical solidity.[3] Yet almost no novelist—certainly not Balzac—saw more clearly than Flaubert into the religious psychosis. Prosper Mérimée (1803–70), who was a historian and a scholar as well as a novelist, was on the other hand so pronounced in his freethinking that he was said to give offence in the society of the Empress Eugénie, in which he was an intimate. Zola's *Rome* and *Lourdes*, whatever their artistic merit, left no doubt about his unbelief.

5. While French *belles lettres* thus in general made for rationalism, criticism was naturally not behindhand. Sainte-Beuve, the most widely appreciative though not the most scientific or just of critics, had only a literary sympathy with the religious types over whom he spent so much effusive research in his voluminous work on *Port-Royal*. "The unbelief of Sainte-Beuve was sincere, radical, and absolute. It has been invariable and invincible during thirty years. That is the truth," writes his sometime secretary, M. Jules Levallois,[4] himself a theist. Zola, who

[1] Arnold's paper on her in *Mixed Essays* is one of his best estimates.
[2] *Lettres de Gustave Flaubert à George Sand*, ed. 1889, pp. 110, 184.
[3] L. Bertrand, *Gustave Flaubert*, 1912, p. 139.
[4] *Sainte-Beuve*, 1872, pref. p. xxxiii.

spoke of the famous critic's rationalism as "a negation, not daring to decide" (*n'osant conclure*), admitted later that it was hardly possible for him to speak more boldly than he did.[1]

In point of fact he went far to compromise himself with the Government by his anti-clericalism in politics. That he should have made his longest literary task the record of the lives and thoughts and troubles of the Jansenist recluses of Port-Royal, without holding their creed, is one of the many evidences that rationalism was fitted to yield an enlarged measure of impartial sympathy even with religious types. In his earlier period, indeed, Sainte-Beuve was more ready to sympathize with a Port-Royalist than with Voltaire, his critical faculty having been evolved from the emotional soil revealed in his poems and his novel, *Volupté*. But it grew ever firmer to the end; and when he made provision, as so many hundreds of cultured Frenchmen had done before him, that he should be buried without any religious ceremony, he put his convictions beyond doubt.

6. Next to Sainte-Beuve in the so-called hierarchy of critics stood (with Scherer) Taine, whose attitude to religion was sufficiently defined by his works on 'The French Classic Philosophers' and on 'Intelligence.' Never biased as a literary critic, any more than Sainte-Beuve, by his philosophy, he was visibly of the scientific school. And such, with a difference, was Edmond Scherer, the Swiss cleric whose liberalism in theology led to his leaving his native land and becoming a *littérateur* in France. When to that line was added Émile Hennequin (1860?–89), the lamented author of *La critique scientifique* (1888), there could be no question that French criticism was in the main rationalistic. In the latter years of the century Catholics took comfort in affirming the critical supremacy of Ferdinand Brunetière (1849–1906), who had proclaimed "the bankruptcy of science"; but that energetic publicist does not seem to have thereby averted attention from the bankruptcy of faith. It is fair to add that M. Émile Faguet has frequently assuaged religious mortifications by disparaging rationalists of the past; but his orthodoxy was more than doubtful.

§ 3

1. In Germany we have seen Goethe and Schiller distinctly counting for naturalism; and of Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825) an orthodox historian declares that his "religion was a chaotic fermenting of the mind, out of which now deism, then Christianity, then a new religion, seems to come forth."[2] The naturalistic line is found to be continued in Heinrich von

[1] *Documents Littéraires*, 1881, pp. 314, 325–8. See also Sainte-Beuve's approving letter of 1867 to Louis Viardot in the *avant-propos* to that writer's *Libre Examen: Apologie d'un Incrédule* (6e édit. 1881, p. 3), where he writes: "the eternity of the world once admitted, everything follows. The fatality of law is a consolation for him who reflects, as well as, and more than, a sadness."

[2] Kahnis, *Internal History of German Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856, p. 78.

Kleist (1777–1811), the unhappy but masterly dramatist of *Der Zerbrochene Krug*, one of the truest geniuses of his time, whose suicide was piously counted to him for unrighteousness, and whose fame arose only long after his death, Goethe having utterly discountenanced him. But the literary genius of rationalism was to be personified, above all, in Heinrich Heine, whose characteristic profession of reconciling himself on his death-bed with the deity he imaged as "the Aristophanes of heaven"[1] serves so scantily to console the orthodox lovers of his matchless song. His criticism of Kant and Fichte is a plain clue to his serious convictions; and that "God is all that there is"[2] is the sufficient expression of his pantheism. The whole purport of his brilliant sketch of the *History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (1834; 2nd ed. 1852) is a propaganda of the very spirit of freethinking, which constitutes for Germany at once a literary classic and a manifesto of rationalism. As he himself said of the return of the aged Schelling to Catholicism, we may say of Heine, that a death-bed reversion to early beliefs is a pathological phenomenon.

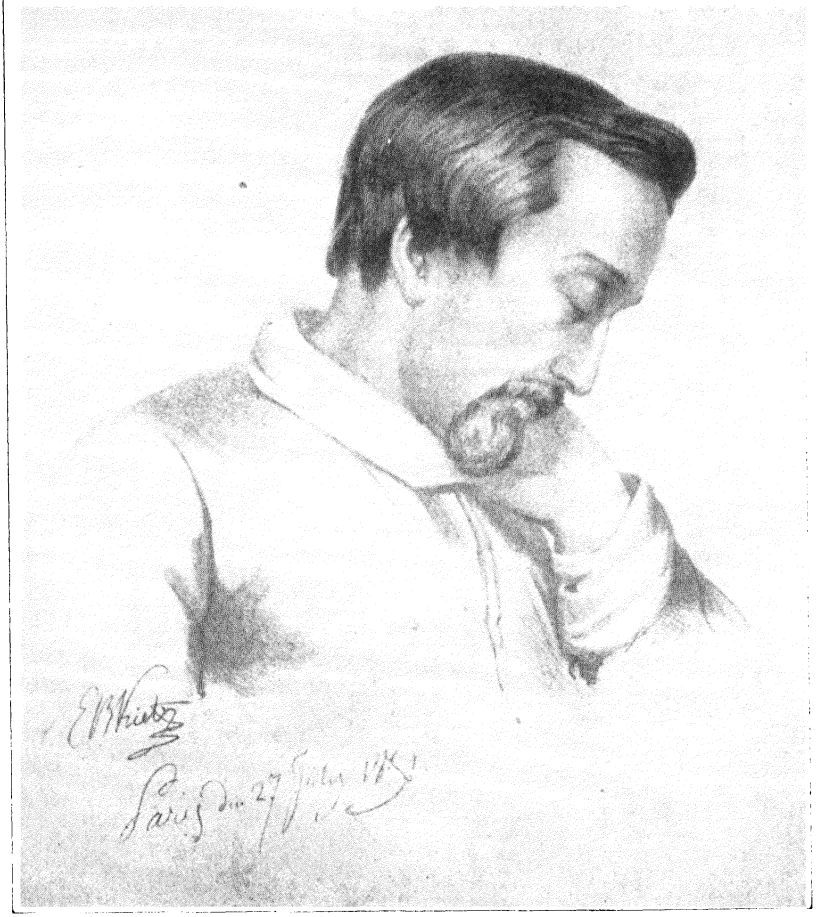
> The use latterly made of Heine's supposed death-bed re-conversion by orthodoxy in England is characteristic. The late letters and conversations in which he said edifying things of God and the Bible are cited for readers who know nothing of the context, and almost as little of the speaker. He had similarly praised the Bible in 1830 (Letter of July, in B. iii of his volume on Börne—*Werke*, vii, 160). To the reader of the whole it is clear that, while Heine's verbal renunciation of his former pantheism, and his characterization of the pantheistic position as a "timid atheism," might have been made independently of his physical prostration, his profession of the theism at which he had formerly scoffed is only momentarily serious, even at a time when such a reversion would have been in no way surprising. His return to and praise of the Bible, the book of his childhood, during years of extreme suffering and utter helplessness, was in the ordinary way of physiological reaction; and as an expression of the large interest which he had never lost in the literature of his race it is no less natural. But inasmuch as his thinking faculty was never extinguished by his tortures, he chronically indicated that his religious talk was a half-conscious indulgence of the overstrained emotional nature, and substantially an exercise of his poetic feeling—always as large a part of his psychosis as his reasoning faculty. Even in death-bed profession he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, his language being that of a deism "scarcely distinguishable in any essential element from that of Voltaire or Diderot" (Strodtmann,

[1] *Geständnisse*, end (*Werke*, ed. 1876, iv, 59).

[2] *Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos.* in *Werke*, ed. cited, iii, 80. The phrase, which goes back to pagan antiquity, was current in Heine's day among the Saint-Simonians.

Heine's Leben und Werke, 2te Aufl. ii, 386). "My religious convictions and views," he writes in the preface to the late *Romancero*, "remain free of all churchism.....I have abjured nothing, not even my old heathen Gods, from whom I have parted in love and friendship." In his will he peremptorily forbade any clerical procedure at his funeral; and his feeling on that side is revealed in his sad jests to his friend Meissner in 1850. "If I could only go out on crutches!" he exclaimed; adding: "Do you know where I should go? Straight to church." On his friends expressing disbelief, he went on: "Certainly, to church! Where should a man go on crutches? Naturally, if I could walk without crutches, I should go to the laughing boulevards or the Jardin Mabille." The story is told in England *without* the conclusion, as a piece of "Christian Evidence."

But even as to his theism Heine was never more than wilfully and poetically a believer. In 1849 we find him jesting about "God" and "the Gods," declaring he will not offend the *lieber Gott*, whose vultures he knows and respects. "Opium is also a religion," he writes in 1850. "Christianity is useless for the healthy.....for the sick it is a very good religion." "If the German people in their need accept the King of Prussia, why should not I accept the personal God?" And in speaking of the postscript to the *Romancero* he writes in 1851: "Alas, I had neither time nor mood to say there what I wanted—namely, that I die as a Poet, who needs neither religion nor philosophy, and has nothing to do with either. The Poet understands very well the symbolic idiom of Religion, and the abstract jargon of Philosophy; but neither the religious gentry nor those of philosophy will ever understand the Poet." A few weeks before his death he signs a New Year letter, "Nebuchadnezzar II, formerly Prussian Atheist, now Lotosflower-adorer." At this time he was taking immense doses of morphia to make his tortures bearable. A few hours before his death a querying pietist got from him the answer: "God will pardon me; it is his business (*c'est son métier*)." The *Geständnisse*, written in 1854, ends in absolute irony; and his alleged grounds for giving up atheism, sometimes quoted seriously, are purely humorous (*Werke*, iv, 33). If it be in any sense true, as he tells in the preface to the *Romancero*, that "the high clerisy of atheism pronounced its anathema" over him—that is to say, that former friends denounced him as a weak turncoat—it needed only the publication of his Life and Letters to enable all freethinkers to take a deeply sympathetic view of his case, which may serve as a supreme instance of "the martyrdom of man." On the whole question see Strodtmann, as cited, ii, 372 *sq.*, and the *Geständnisse*, which should be compared with the earlier written fragments of *Briefe über Deutschland* (*Werke*, iii, 110), where there are some significant variations in statements of fact.



HEINRICH HEINE

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Since Heine, German *belles lettres* has not been a first-rate influence in Europe; and in his day it was poorly represented, on the freethought side, by such fiction as the novel of the Saint-Simonian Gutzkow, *Wally, die Zweiflerinn* ('Wally, the Woman Doubter,' 1835)—an essentially bad novel loaded with an apparatus of "Confessions on Religion and Christianity" borrowed from the writings of Reimarus published by Lessing.[1] But in the next generation some of the leading novelists, as Auerbach and Heyse, were well known to have shared in the rational philosophy of their age; and the Christianity of Wagner, whose precarious support to the cause of faith has been welcomed chiefly by its heteroclite adherents, counts for nothing in the critical scale.[2]

2. Perhaps the most considerable evidence, in *belles lettres*, of the predominance of rationalism in modern Europe is to be found in the literary history of the Scandinavian States and Russia. The Russian development indeed had gone far ere the modern Scandinavian literatures had well begun. Already in the first quarter of the century the poet Poushkine was an avowed heretic; and Gogol even let his art suffer from his preoccupations with the new humanitarian ideas; while the critic Biélinsky, classed by Tourguénief as the Lessing of Russia,[3] was pronouncedly rationalistic,[4] as was his contemporary the critic Granovsky,[5] reputed the finest Russian stylist of his day. At this period *belles lettres* stood for every form of intellectual influence in Russia,[6] and all educated thought was moulded by it. The most perfect artistic result is the fiction of the freethinker Tourguénief,[7] the Sophocles of the modern novel. His two great contemporaries, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, count indeed for supernaturalism; but the truly wonderful genius of the former was something apart from his philosophy, which was merely childlike; and the latter, the least masterly if the most strenuous artist of the three, made his religious converts in Russia chiefly among the uneducated, and was in any case sharply antagonistic to orthodox Christianity. It does not appear that the younger writer, Potapenko, a fine artist, was orthodox, despite his extremely sympathetic presentment of a superior priest; and the still later Gorky is an absolute Naturalist.

3. In Norway and Denmark, again, there were not many exceptions to the freethinking tendency among the leading living men of letters in the latter part of the century. In the person of the abnormal religionist Sören Kierkegaard (1813–55) a new force of criticism began to stir in

[1] See Miss E. M. Butler's *The Saint-Simonian Religion in Germany*, 1926, ch. xviii.

[2] See Ernest Newman's *Study of Wagner*, 1899, p. 390, *note*, as to the vagueness of Wagnerians on the subject.

[3] Tikhomirov, *La Russie*, 2e édit. p. 343.

[4] See Comte de Vogüé's *Le roman russe*, p. 218, as to his propaganda of atheism.

[5] Arnaudo, *Le Nihilisme et les Nihilistes*, French tr. p. 50.

[6] Tikhomirov, p. 344.

[7] "Il [Tourguénief] était libre-penseur, et détestât l'apparat religieux d'une manière toute particulière." I. Pavlovsky, *Souvenirs sur Tourguénief*, 1887, p. 242.

Denmark. Setting out as a theologian, Kierkegaard gradually developed, always on quasi-religious lines, into a vehement assailant of conventional Christianity, somewhat in the spirit of Pascal, somewhat in that of Feuerbach, again in that of Ruskin; and in a temper recalling now a Berserker and now a Hebrew prophet. The general effect of his teaching may be gathered from the mass of the work of Henrik Ibsen, who was his disciple, and in particular from Ibsen's *Brand*, of which the hero is partly modelled on Kierkegaard.[1] Ibsen, though his *Brand* was counted to him for righteousness by the Churches, showed himself a freethinker in *The Enemy of the People*, and a thorough-going naturalist in all his later work; Björnson was an active freethinker; the eminent Danish critic, Georg Brandes, early avowed himself to the same effect; and his brother, the dramatist, Edward Brandes, was elected to the Danish Parliament in 1871 despite his declaration that he believed in neither the Christian nor the Jewish God. Most of the younger *littérateurs* of Norway and Sweden seem to be of a similar cast of thought.

4. Needless to say, the modern spirit, as we call it, has revealed itself in European literature in many indirect ways, apart from any pronouncements on questions of religious belief. Many a German historian has quietly proceeded upon rationalist principles in his investigations; and sometimes indirect revelations are striking. Max Wolfgang Duncker, for instance, in his 'History of Antiquity' (1852–7) treated "sacred" history on the same level with profane, freely criticizing the Hebrew records, when Ranke was later to revert to the obsolete uncritical convention. At the middle of the century, the most illustrious publicist in Germany was Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), the encyclopædic man of science, traveller, explorer, lecturer, observer, everywhere honoured, and specially by the pious Prussian King, Frederick William IV, as by his predecessor. Yet throughout the *Kosmos* (1845–58) and in its author's Life there is no trace of religious belief beyond the vaguest indications of theism. Christianity is by him treated[2] simply as a civilizing influence which tended to promote the idea of the unity of the human race, and that but slowly, with much resistance from ecclesiastical landowners. Semitic religion is presented as an interesting way of viewing Nature, and its theistic hymns are treated as visions of the Cosmos.[3]

Naturally there were murmurs at this exclusion of the concept of the Personal Deity from the study of the universe; but Humboldt appears to have been undisturbed, though his temperament was sufficiently susceptible to approbation. His discreet biographer, Klencke, avows that his political and religious opinions were in complete opposition to those of his King,[4] though the latter always maintained his early attachment,

[1] See the article, "Un précurseur d'Henrik Ibsen, Soeren Kierkegaard," in the *Revue de Paris*, July 1, 1901. [2] *Cosmos*, Eng. trans. ii, 567–8.
[3] *Id.* p. 411–15.
[4] *Lives of the Brothers Humboldt*, trans. by Juliette Bauer, 1852, p. 144.

and greatly valued Humboldt's counsel. The great explorer figured in German eyes, in his scientific way, very much as Goethe had done in his—as a great pagan; and his influence, which extended over all Europe, was wholly naturalistic.

The fact that in Germany the most illustrious publicist, and in France and England two of the most eminent historians, in the persons of Michelet and Grote, were patently freethinkers, illustrates broadly the general movement of intelligence. If Macaulay was decorously conformist, and Carlyle obscurantist, they were none the less perceptibly aloof from orthodox piety; and Grote was rationalistic through and through; while Buckle, despite his theism, was aggressively so. History, it was apparent, was approximating once more to the critical plane of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Gibbon, and Hume; Grote in particular laying out a conception of mythology which was visibly anti-theosophic.[1] And if he was not a brilliant writer, his great work was at least as impressive on the literary side as the Catholic 'History of England' by Lingard, which is the only massive English history of its century that advocates traditional faith. Froude's anti-Catholic championship of Anglican Protestantism embodied no personal confession of faith.

Nor does Froude's learned and orthodox enemy in the historical field, Edward Freeman, constitute an intellectual pillar of pietism. Unimpressive as a thinker even in the study of history, he privately confesses himself an uncritical adherent of his Church. "I worship," he avows, "just because I can't understand." "What I wrote about Christianity and the Geocentric System" [a wholly nugatory piece of reasoning] "was simply to show that a certain pretended argument proved nothing. It always seems to me that all these subjects are beyond our faculties. Theism and atheism are to me both philosophically inconceivable."[2] The defect of thinking power which makes his historical generalizations so often trivial was thus a condition of his conformism. The more active mind of John Richard Green, the most widely popular English historian of his generation, took other lines, in such sort that he was the first historical writer to confront his readers with the fact that Shakespeare stood outside the Christian creed.

But the vital aspect of the whole matter is the evident tendency of historic study to exclude the religious temper and religious solutions. Even as the critical study of Roman origins was felt by French ecclesiastics in the eighteenth century to be "impious," so the searchings of

[1] A curious example of the feebleness of recent religious reaction against reason is the avowal by the editors of an epitome of Grote's History of Greece (Routledge, 1907) that they excise his account of the Legendary Period, *because* "Firstly, Grote was a rationalist" (editors' Preface, p. xix). They nevertheless accept Bain's panegyric of his character.

[2] Letters in *Life and Letters*, by Dean Stephens, 1895, ii, 214, 444. That the last-cited letter was in reply to an invitation from Aberdeen University to deliver the Gifford Lecture is significant of the straits in which orthodoxy found itself in 1891.

history in the nineteenth have gone step for step with the rejection of pious tradition. Being properly a form of science, history more and more recedes from dogmatics and from sectarianism. Even Bishop Stubbs exhibits the pressures of the time on his official thought. Bishop Thirlwall put aside his faith, whatever it was, to unrol the scroll of pagan Greece; Gardiner, one of the few personally pious men among eminent modern historians, is little influenced by his creed in his decipherment of the age he studies; and after Finlay, who first since Gibbon exhibits Byzantine Christianity with a creedless detachment, comes Bury, the thoroughly rationalistic historian, who, like George Eliot in fiction, can see the religious types with the more sympathy because his intellectual detachment is so complete.

§ 4

1. English readers can have no difficulty in tracing a similar progressive change in the complexion of their own *belles lettres* through the century. In "serious" artistic literature, as illustrated by Carlyle, Emerson, and Ruskin, they can see it mirrored. Ruskin in particular, by his passage from fanatical Protestantism to disbelief in all revelation, reveals the "form and pressure" of the *Zeitgeist* in an almost tragical fashion.[1] Fiction, which was to be the predominating literary form of the age, especially in England, in its very nature tended to count for secular as against religious feeling. Much has been written of the filiation of music and architecture, painting and sculpture, to religion; but surprisingly little of the similar filiation of fiction. Yet it was in the making of religious myths that systematic fiction began; and there would seem to be significance in the fact that in the modern age in which religion has undergone the greatest deflation the practice of fiction has become the outstanding literary form. A similar coincidence has been noted in the ages of Homer and Virgil. The impulse to the writing of fiction is doubtless largely supplied by the economic demand; but that too is plainly correlative to the decay of Christian fervour, which so long withstood the theatre and the novel, as it had formerly withstood sculpture.

That the deflected impulse, playing uncontrolled, may have an unbalancing effect on mental life, undermining its discipline and economy as religion did, is another matter, to be debated as part of the problem of the proper cultural distribution of energy. Over-indulgence in fiction, involving under-culture in other fields, is probably one of the commonest modern sources of mental enervation, and therefore one of the hindrances to intellectual progress. Of course the problem as to fiction is theoretically on all fours with the similar question as to music and the arts, though in Britain it is chiefly as to fiction that there is serious over-balance.

[1] Refs. in *Modern Humanists Reconsidered*, pp. 89-90.

2. In English fiction, the beginning of the end of genuine faith was apparent to the prophetic eyes of Wilberforce and Robert Hall, of whom the former lamented the total absence of Christian sentiment from nearly all the successful fiction even of his day;[1] and the latter avowed the pain with which he noted that Miss Edgeworth, whom he admired for her style and art, put absolutely no religion in her books,[2] while Hannah More, whose principles were so excellent, had such a vicious style. No one, in fact, could combine didactic piety with good fictive art. Jane Austen's final "seriousness" could not make her count as a propagandist. Her frequent pictures of unadmirable or unspiritual clerics in fact convey an impression of easiness of temper on religious matters. The true evangelicals spontaneously reacted against novel-reading as did their Puritan ancestors against the drama; and though we find Whately and Dean Hook[3] quite early admiring Jane Austen, the general acceptance of the novel-reading habit may be said to have been in the ratio of the decadence of orthodoxy. Charlotte Brontë, being fundamentally an artist, would not in any case have imposed on her novels the religious views which belonged to her training; but these, if inserted, would never have satisfied the evangelicals.

3. The fact that her sister Emily, latterly reckoned by some critics the greater genius of the two, was at heart a pantheist,[4] gives force to the surmise that Charlotte's theism, which is indicated in her comments on what she reckoned the aberration of Harriet Martineau, went no further than that emotional basis. Her early readers were in fact ruffled by the absence of definite Christianism from her books, suspecting rather a hostility to churchly things. Her pictures of clerics were certainly contributory to such a temper; and we know that in the famous-infamous article in the *Quarterly Review*,[5] in which a foul aspersion was cast on her character by way of professed inference from *Jane Eyre*, she is charged with "a heathenish doctrine of religion";[6] to which are added the verdicts that "No Christian grace is perceptible upon her," and that "Altogether the autobiography of Jane Eyre is pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition."

[1] *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System*, 8th ed. p. 368. Wilberforce points with chagrin to the superiority of Mohammedan writers in these matters.

[2] "In point of tendency I should class her books among the most irreligious I ever read," delineating good characters in every aspect, "and all this without the remotest allusion to Christianity, the only true religion." Cited in O. Gregory's *Brief Memoir of Robert Hall*, 1833, p. 242. The context tells how Miss Edgeworth avowed that she had not thought religion necessary in books meant for the upper classes.

[3] *Life of Dean Hook*, ed. 1880, pp. 330, 590.

[4] See her poems.

[5] Dec. 1848.

[6] The black passage runs: "Whoever it be" [i.e., man or woman] "it is a person who with great mental power combines a total ignorance of the habits of society, a great coarseness of taste, and a heathenish doctrine of religion. For if we ascribe the work to a woman at all, we have no alternative but to ascribe it to one who has, for some sufficient reason, long forfeited the society of her own sex."

That pronouncement served for many as a decisive revelation of the efficacy of faith for the manufacture of malignity; though the context revealed that fury against democratic "ungodly discontent" was part of the inspiration. "Jane Eyre is proud," wrote the reviewer, "and therefore she is ungrateful too": that is to say, she shows no proper gratitude to the orphanage authorities for their beneficent care. It is much to be suspected that the *Quarterly* contributed powerfully, in this instance, to the formation of the growing opinion that Christianity is "a bad religion." And if, as there seems strong reason to surmise, the pious reviewer particularly resented a disrespectful attitude towards the clergy, that attitude was certainly not thenceforth modified for the better among the reading public. There is no record of any apology having ever been tendered by the Christian publisher or the Christian editor. It certainly testified to the still strong position of orthodoxy in the period that such a dastardly outrage could pass with merely private protest.

It has been latterly believed that the hushing-up of the outrage was due to the fact that the article in question was primarily written by a woman—Miss Rigby, afterwards Lady Eastlake. This authorship appears to be proved (as was first pointed out by Sir W. R. Nicoll) by a letter printed in the *Memoirs and Letters of Sara Coleridge*, ii, 223. But it has been shown (*The Brontës in Ireland*, by Dr. William Wright, 1893, ch. xxx) by an investigator who had been partly anticipated by Mr. Andrew Lang (*id.* p. 305, *note*) that the article reveals at least two distinct hands—"a pagan hand and a would-be Christian"—completely differentiated alike by style and sentiment. The "pagan" hand is very clearly marked in the discussion of Thackeray's Becky Sharp: the other contributes the gross aspersion and the pious invective against the author and the heroine of *Jane Eyre*.[1]

That the review editors of the period commonly altered and interpolated the articles of their contributors is well known. Macaulay was almost the first who could effectually resist the practice. Dr. Wright accordingly comes to the conclusion that the evil matter under notice was inserted by the *Quarterly* editor, John Gibson Lockhart; and whereas Mr. Birrell has branded the reviewer as a "detestable hypocrite," Dr. Wright airily, if ironically, decides that for Lockhart it was "a mere matter of business, and a purely editorial affair, to maintain the traditional tone of the *Review*." It is, however, a serious matter to load the memory of a reputable man of letters with such an infamy, in a case where other solutions are open. "The brilliant Miss Rigby" is happily vindicated, even

[1] Dr. Wright gives a delightful story of how Charlotte's Irish uncle Hugh solemnly and scientifically prepared a special shillelagh and made his way to London to use it, but could never get at the *Quarterly* editor.

in being, *ad hoc*, labelled "a pagan." Dr. Wright justifiably puts it "beyond the range of things probable that the pharisaic part of the article could have come from the same source as *Livonian Tales* and the *Letters from the Baltic*."[1] But was the culprit Lockhart?

Dr. Wright, while insisting that Lockhart remains responsible as editor, appears to admit that the Rev. Whitwell Elwin, who was Lockhart's successor in the editorship, and who had previously been closely connected with the *Review* (see *D.N.B.*), may have made the alterations. Certainly Elwin in turn is not to be personally branded without clear evidence; and Lockhart expressly approved of him as a successor. But it is proper to indicate that the pious malignities in the ostensibly corrupted article strongly suggest a clerical hand, and are extremely unlikely to have been penned by Lockhart. They are in fact wholly incongruous with all his known writing. The point is the more urgently to be pressed because the corruptions tended to blacken the good name not merely of one gifted woman but of two —of Miss Rigby as well as Charlotte Brontë. The biographer of Mrs. Grote, though an avowed theist (see the close of the book), was surely not a calumnious pietist.

4. With Thackeray and Dickens, serious fiction might seem to be on the side of faith, both being liberally religious,[2] and expressly respectful to religious sentiment in their books. But Thackeray's clerics are in general no more reverently presented than Jane Austen's or Charlotte Brontë's, and he certainly gave no furtherance to either ecclesiastical or evangelical orthodoxy. It is a curious circumstance,[3] significant of the contrary moral and intellectual virtue of the two ways of thinking, that the first really powerful English novelist who succeeded in creating literary sympathy with religious types was George Eliot, the unbeliever, the translator of Strauss and Feuerbach, the grave denier of the formulas of theism and immortality. The vigorously orthodox Anthony Trollope could not make his novels subserve his creed, much less his Church; and the novelists who, like Miss Charlotte Yonge, strove to support the Church, did not rank high as artists, though Miss Yonge was an admirably diligent woman-of-letters.

Trollope, of whom some contemporaries said that the foremost articles in his creed were fox-hunting and the Holy Trinity, is described by his ablest biographer as "a Christian and (though

[1] To these titles should be added '*Mrs. Grote: A Sketch*, by Lady Eastlake' (1880) —an admirable portrait of that powerful person, with valuable lights on her illustrious husband.

[2] Dickens indeed, at a number of points, reflected the transforming sentiment of his day. See his *Letters*, 1-vol. ed. 1893, pp. 473, 561, 575. "As for the Church," he writes at one time, "I am sick of it." But at the end (pp. 699, 706) he is deeply devotional, without being doctrinal.

[3] Partly paralleled, as we have noted, in the case of Flaubert.

without great conviction) a conforming member of the Anglican Church," but yet something of a *frondeur*, "exceptionally critical of Church dogma and of Church discipline. Once, in a letter to a young friend, he declared that taking orders was crippling to a man's mentality" (Michael Sadleir, *Trollope: A Commentary*, 1927, p. 150). And his portraits of clerics are as frequently unflattering as Thackeray's.

Nevertheless he was convinced that from unbelief in God "unhappiness must inevitably come," and held by the "authority and supremacy of Christian ethics," whatever that may mean. He was at vehement strife with his fellow Christian Freeman on the ethics of fox-hunting. He did not "believe in exhibitions of God's anger," but did believe "in exhibitions of His mercy." It is edifying to learn from Mr. Sadleir that Trollope, whose reduction of all reflection to platitude is the deadweight on his art, was hostile to Bacon as "a writer who envelops platitudes in pretentious folds of language" (*id.* p. 352).

The most aggressively orthodox imaginative writer of the period was George Borrow, the widely popular author of *The Bible in Spain* (1843), whose bellicose piety consisted largely in hatred of the Church of Rome. His quasi-autobiographical *Lavengro* (1851) is introduced by a preface of roaring vituperation of the hated Church, presumably inspired by the recent Tractarian movement. But whatever might be the fascination of Borrow's froward genius, his robustious eloquence was not fitted to enhance the claims of religious sentiment among the thoughtful, and seems not unlikely to have moved sensitive spirits in one or other of the directions which he detested. "If this is religion," they would muse, "we must surely have something else." As a pietist, he represents the fanaticism of the past without its deeper fervour of evangelicalism. And even he exhibits the pressures of rationalism on his mind in youth.[1]

5. At the end of the century, most of the leading writers of the higher fiction were known to be either rationalists or simple theists. The genius of Olive Schreiner ranged itself on the side of naturalism; and against the heavy metal of George Meredith, Joseph Conrad, Thomas Hardy, Mr. Arnold Bennett, and Mr. George Moore (whose sympathetic handling of religious types at times suggests the influence of Huysmans), orthodoxy—apart from the Neo-Unitarian Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mrs. Oliphant—could but claim artists of the third or lower grades. Mrs. Oliphant's incursion into mystical romance was not felt to have assisted either the cause of religion or her own artistic reputation; and the championship of some of the lower grades of performer may be regarded as the last humiliation of the historic creed. On the other hand, Thomas Hardy perhaps secured a prestige above his strict æsthetic

[1] *Lavengro*, chs. xxiii, xxv, xxxvi.

merits by his visibly "pagan" attitude to life as against either the moralistic or the theistic. It was felt to come from a deeper penetration of life, a truer outlook on the vast vicissitude of things.

In 1905 there was current a vulgar novel entitled *When it was Dark*, wherein was drawn a blood-curdling picture of what would happen in the event of a general surrender of Christian faith. Despite some episcopal approbation, the book excited much disgust among the more enlightened clergy. The preface to Miss Marie Corelli's *Mighty Atom* may serve to convey to the many readers who cannot peruse the works of that lady an idea of the temper in which she vindicated her creed. Another popular novelist of a low artistic grade, the late Mr. Seton-Merriman, avowed his religious soundness in a romance with a Russian plot, entitled *The Sowers*. Referring to the impressions produced by great scenes of Nature, he writes: "These places and these times are good for convalescent atheists and such as pose as unbelievers—the cheapest form of notoriety" (cheap ed. p. 168). The novelist's own Christian ethic is thus indicated: "He had Jewish blood in his veins, which.....carried with it the usual tendency to cringe. It is in the blood; it is part of that which the people who stood without Pilate's palace took upon themselves and their children" (p. 59). But the enormous mass of modern novels includes some tolerable pleas for faith, as well as many manifestoes of agnosticism. One of the works of the late "Edna Lyall," *We Too*, was notable as the expression of the sympathy of a devout, generous, and amiable Christian lady with the personality and career of Bradlaugh.

6. As the balance of educated opinion turns more and more against vulgar orthodoxy, there is a natural disposition in the religious world to deny statements as to the scepticism of eminent writers, and to claim special religiosity for favourite artists. An attempt of the latter kind has been made[1] in the case of Thackeray to show that that great artist was unhappy, and unbalanced in his art, until he realized that the world is exactly as it is because the All-Father had so willed it, whereafter he not only became happy but reached a new artistic greatness. The critical verdict is supposed to be clinched by claiming that *Denis Duval* is Thackeray's best book. No competent critic has ever endorsed that judgment; and the reader of the biography will readily discover that Thackeray's later tone of resignation was but the substitution of sad surrender for the resilient indictment of human evil which inspired *Vanity Fair* and *The Newcomes*. Happy in his theism Thackeray never could be and never was, any more than any philosopher who similarly sought to cut the knot of the theistic problem of moral evil.

[1] *The Spiritual Drama in the Life of Thackeray*, by Prof. N. W. Walker, of Charleston, 1913.

7. Among the most artistically gifted of the English story-writers and essayists of the last generation of the century was Richard Jefferies (d. 1887), who in *The Story of My Heart* (1883) has told how "the last traces and relics of superstitions acquired compulsorily in childhood" finally passed away from his mind, leaving him a Naturalist in every sense of the word. In the *Eulogy of Richard Jefferies* published by Sir Walter Besant in 1888 it is asserted that on his death-bed Jefferies returned to his creed, and "died listening with faith and love to the words contained in the Old Book." A popular account of this "conversion" accordingly became current, and was employed to the usual purpose. As has been shown by a careful student, and as was admitted on inquiry by Sir Walter Besant, there had been no conversion whatever, Jefferies having simply listened to his wife's reading without hinting at any change in his convictions.[1] Despite his biographer's express admission of his error, Christian journals, such as the *Spectator*, burked the facts; one, the *Christian*, piously charged dishonesty on the writer who brought them to light; and a third, the Salvationist *War Cry*, pronounced his action "the basest form of chicanery and falsehood."[2] The episode is worth noting as indicating the qualities which still frequently attach to orthodox propaganda at its lower levels. The angry implication that a religious faith reached in a state of inanition is a testimony to "divine truth" tells of the order of intelligence at work.

8. The case of Jefferies was that of hundreds of men of letters of his time. Later biographies supply a multitude of instances which cannot be noted in these pages, but may be found in large number in Mr. McCabe's Biographical Dictionary of Rationalists. The ever-increasing number of disclosures of private rationalism warrants the inference—actually drawn in the present day by many of the higher clergy—that among the *intelligentsia* unbelief has long been the rule rather than the exception. The late George Birkbeck Hill, the accomplished annotator of Boswell's Life of Johnson, in his article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* on his famous uncle, Sir Rowland Hill, the inventor of penny postage, tells that about 1830 his uncle "had ceased even to be a unitarian. On religious matters he thought with Grote and the two Mills." In Sir Rowland's lifetime, such an announcement would have caused consternation. For his own part, despite a vein of vague religious emotionalism, and despite his partly hostile attitude to Gibbon, Hume, and George Eliot, and his harsh antipathy to Stanley, Birkbeck Hill in his letters avows an intense loathing for medieval religion.[3] "Priestcraft in every

[1] Art. "The Faith of Richard Jefferies," by H. S. Salt, in *Westminster Review*, August, 1905, rep. as pamphlet by the R. P. A., 1906. See also his article in the *Literary Guide*, July, 1926.

[2] The writer of these scurrilities is Mr. Bramwell Booth. *War Cry*, May 27, 1905.

[3] *Letters of George Birkbeck Hill*, 1906, pp. 211–12. His antipathy to J. H. Newman was still fiercer than his dislike of Stanley. *Id.* p. 204.

form," he writes, "I hate, and dogma I laugh at"; and after a poetic appraisal of Christianity he comments [1]:—

> It is a very noble poem, but it is of such stuff as dreams are made of. I have sometimes thought of writing two dialogues or essays, in one of which should be set forth all the good religion has done.....and on the other hand all the misery and oppressions and persecutions and idle terrors of the unseen, and ignorance and tyranny, it has produced. Who could hold the balance evenly?

In the English literary world of Birkbeck Hill's time, such sentiments found wide assent; not always including acceptance of his literary conception of "the good religion has done." By that time the balance of intelligent opinion had turned from traditionism to criticism; and genius no less than science was prevailingly heterodox. The orthodox piety of J. H. Shorthouse was already a rarity when *John Inglesant* appeared (1881).

R. L. Stevenson, who distinguished himself by a supremely coarse and cowardly—albeit skilfully poetic—attack on Bradlaugh [2] in his worst stress of battle, did not succeed in lending any religious effect to his treatment of what he called "holy" things. Some of his friends regarded as a literary pose his drawing up of prayers for his household at Vailima. He had however paraded a commonplace orthodoxy in his juvenile story, *The Pavilion on the Links*, where it is told of the "noble bad man" of the story that "like all freethinkers he was much under the influence of superstition" (ch. vii). But the narrator, who "well knew" and "heartily derided" the "infidel opinions" of the other, avows the same superstition; and the villain of the story is a Bible-reader, whom the narrator "despises" for whispering prayers when about to meet death.

Stevenson's ill-balanced mentality is disclosed in his alternation between the pose of chivalry and the ethic which in *The Wreckers* makes him callously present as venial a brutish massacre, and treat with high consideration the virginal hero who makes money by sailing hopelessly unseaworthy ships, under high insurance, to the drowning of their crews. In Stevenson's books there is no religious character, and no religious thought save such as is vended by the worse artists. On the other hand, he shows at times a cynical delight in the presentment of a pious ruffian. In *The Ebb Tide*, for instance, the "hero" Attwater is a murderous mystic: and the close of the book presents as pure farce his success in bringing a malleable rogue, capable alternately of murder and benevolence, "to Jesus."

[1] *Id.* p. 245. On p. 183 he craves for "a return of all the trials, civil and criminal, of late years, in which parsons have been proved rogues and criminals. It would prove, I am convinced, that as a class they are very low down in morality—a long way below attorneys." Such a record has been produced in the United States.

[2] *Underwoods*, xxx.

The story, however, with its always unconvincing psychology, was by Stevenson himself severely disparaged, as was fitting.

On a balance, he must be allowed to have enrolled himself on the side of faith by his Vailima prayers, as by his scurrilous missile against Bradlaugh; and his numerous Christian admirers may fairly have the comfort of claiming him on both scores. Freethinkers will have the less regret when they balance the deft literary genius, with his limitary grasp of life, against the unchivalrous combatant who loved to profess chivalry. His critical perversity is as fully—if with less crude brutality—exhibited in his attack on Burns as in his attack on Bradlaugh. The scientific summary is that he was an unstable compound, alike as artist and as man.

9. The same progression is perceptible in poetry as in prose. Already in 1829, despite the frown of orthodoxy and respectability, in the famous debate between students of Oxford and Cambridge at the Oxford Union, all the best speaking was on the side of Shelley's claim as against Byron's, the Cambridge men routing the feeble resistance of Oxford orthodoxy, though the Oxonians had a majority of 33 in a vote of 123.[1] And the newer poets clearly belonged to a new age. The poem *Festus* (1839), by Philip James Bailey, surprisingly acclaimed at its appearance by the young Tennyson, no less admired by the young D. G. Rossetti, and destined to dozens of editions (the most numerous and the latest being issued in the United States) till far on in the century, was denounced by orthodoxy for its pantheism, which indeed was obtrusive, and the book owed its long vogue to its heterodoxy in that kind. The *Death's Jest Book* of Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–49) was in a different fashion also heteroclite.

Tennyson himself, who so completely eclipsed Bailey and other minor stars, was almost in his own despite a reflection of the trouble that, all through his life, was passing over the serious thought of England. It was fitting that, *qua* poet, he should never be a coherent thinker, but should alternate between Christism and pantheism, warmongering and philanthropy, and should weaken the last and noblest of all his lyrics by a relapse from cosmic song to old anthropomorphism. He paid the penalty of his trimming when, in his *Promise of May* (1882), he evoked an explosion of indignation by appearing to strike at rationalism below the belt;[2] and it is probable that the latter-day reaction against him, which seems to lose sight of his high æsthetic mastery in belittlement of his thought, is a confused expression of the distaste set up by his inadequate philosophizing in a generation of penmen not markedly given to exact analysis.

[1] The argument for Shelley's Christian leanings was distinctly specious. H. A. Morrah, *The Oxford Union*, 1923, p. 37. Cp. *Life of Lord Houghton*, by T. Wemyss Reid, 1890, i, 77–8. In Mr. Morrah's account the figures are confused (p. 38).

[2] Tennyson explained away his play into non-significance. He had written it unwillingly. *Life*, 1-vol. ed. p. 699.

10. Of Browning, in his turn, no special pleading can make an orthodox Christian. It must have been his spontaneous hostility to evangelicalism that gave vehemence to his declaration to Robert Buchanan that he was "certainly not" a Christian.[1] On the other hand, he was one of the most overweening theists of his time, consummately confident of being in touch with a Personal Omnipotence; and it was natural to him to sketch a Christianity of his own, in which Christ becomes another mouthpiece of the All-Father. Browning, however, was more of a reasoner than most poets; and his ethic, as dramatized in *The Statue and the Bust*, could be far from conformist; though in *At the Morgue* he burked the mystery of evil in the usual hand-to-mouth fashion of the theist. It was certainly his deviations from the orthodox norm, with his genius of lyric dramatization, that gave him his strong hold on the interest of his age. On a general view, despite the neo-Biblical machinery of *Saul* and *A Death in the Desert*, he makes potently for the modern religion of auto-suggestion, which is at least the dismissal of the old.

In the very competent and very impartial analysis of Professor C. H. Herford (in Blackwood's series of 'Modern English Writers,' 1905), Browning's mental attitude to Christianity, as set forth in *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*, is well shown to have undergone a striking development from 1849 onwards. *Saul* belongs, with *Pippa Passes*, to 1845; and though his wife's influence from that time onward quickened his anthropomorphism, the ideas underlying *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day* (1850) tell of another order of impulse. They are essentially critical of common Christianity; and the double poem has its disintegrating effect. In several aspects, Browning transcends the ethic of Tennyson, always shunning the lure of war, save in the dramatic interest, as in *Luria*: hence his conquest of a special moral admiration. Yet when the devotee of Shelley was found to have cast off his zeal, for reasons always open to all readers, and to have tragically resented the omission of his friend Carlyle to recommend his poetry, the spell of his sibylline authority, and the elevating temper ascribed to his theism, lost their virtue in his case also. "Supra-celestial" sentiment had failed to engender any greatness apart from the poetic mood. Browning's fame, like that of Tennyson, has to wait for the return to a quite judicial appreciation of his poetry, which is great enough to endure.

11. It may or may not be significant of the virtue of reason in *belles-lettres* that Matthew Arnold, who first of the post-Wordsworthian poets revealed in his verse his dismissal of the traditional faith, has suffered in his fame least of all from reaction. He has presented the anomaly of a

[1] Cp. Mrs. Sutherland Orr's article on "The Religious Opinions of Robert Browning" in the *Contemporary Review*, December, 1891, p. 878; and the present writer's *Tennyson and Browning as Teachers*, 1903.

pontifical critic and prophet doubled with a diffident poet; though in the snarling youthful sonnet cast at 'An Independent Preacher', he unwittingly preserves record of the mental suburbia in which æsthetic limitations were held to be the specialty of Dissent. His figure 'of the "melancholy, long-withdrawing roar" (even with that perilous substantive) of the receding tide of faith softened for orthodox spirits their sense of his furtherance of the ebb. His fame has undoubtedly benefited by his choice of the key of doubt while Browning was declaiming his anthropomorphic certitudes and Tennyson was coining golden platitudes about a doubt that was "honest"—as if there could be any other. The Arnoldian Bibliolatry does not appear in the poems.

12. In the last decades of the century, accordingly, English poetry had quite definitely revealed to the age its "form and pressure." The rationalism of D. G. Rossetti, indeed, did not colour his poetry save negatively, but he was clearly no Christian. Swinburne, who so defiantly chose his side, has perhaps profited even unduly in his later vogue from his early decision. James Thomson the Second ("B. V.") has not yet, perhaps, found the full notice merited by his *City of Dreadful Night*, in its way a greater thing than any poem by Swinburne, who never quite transcended the "pre-Raphaelite" archaism which swathed into permanent staginess the muse of William Morris. But there could be no question for intelligent young readers at the century's end that the company of singers in the main wore the livery of free reason. James Thomson's ill-starred life, joined with the burden of his tragic poem, could keep him in the odour of unpopularity inseparable from the *National Reformer* in its day; but William Watson had declared in worthily noble diction for a high agnosticism, and the late John Davidson defied orthodox ethics in the name of his very antinomian theology;[1] while on the side of the regulation religion—since Mr. Yeats is but a stray Druid, with a witchcraft of rhythm—can be cited at best the regimental psalmody of Mr. Kipling, lyrist of trumpet and drum; the declamatory orthodoxy of Mr. Noyes, who found his real success in a pagan theme; and the Godism of W. E. Henley, whereat the prosaic godly look askance. And though many of the admirers of Francis Thompson seem to have been unable to distinguish between the inspiration of his stained-glass Mariolatries and his really great and sincere verse—which is significantly excluded from the Catholic 'Selections' made from his work—the discerning reader can see in him also the work of the Zeit-Geist.

Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar' was the last admirable English poem which seemed to strike the old note of creed; and there, at the end of

[1] Apropos of his *Theatrocrat*, which he modestly called "the most profound and original of English books," Mr. Davidson in a newspaper article proclaimed himself on socio-political grounds an anti-Christian. "I take the first resolute step out of Christendom," was his claim (*Daily Chronicle*, December 20, 1905).

an otherwise perfect poem, it was not happily struck.[1] He had led more minds to pantheism than to pietism; and when, not long before his death, he was induced to take the Communion with his family, he told the officiating clergyman that he did so in his own and not in the sacerdotal sense. Thus the closing aspiration of 'Crossing the Bar' is a poetic sentiment, and not a conviction.[2]

13. Perhaps the most remarkable thing in English literary history in the last quarter of the century is the signal conquest made by Edward Fitzgerald's version of 'The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám' (1859–68). That such a masterpiece should have been at first entirely ignored alike by readers and reviewers is probably to be understood as a result of the normal incapacity to appreciate a new rhythm, and the journalistic attitude to anything savouring of unbelief. But, when rescued by the vigilance and the enthusiasm of D. G. Rossetti, the book took its place once for all as an English classic, in which the irreligious flavour is half the secret of the charm. The other half, the rare harmony of diction and rhythm, has carried that pagan interlude through thousands of doorways barred to any more explicit denial of conventional dogma. But the ultimate universality of its reception is of course the measure of the disestablishment of the orthodox creed. Fitzgerald's 'Omar' is the English pocket poet of the age of rationalism, not to be superseded by more faithful translations. Fitzgerald, as is now well known, had outgone the free-thinking of Omar, which was real enough; and Mr. Benn[3] has inferred that it was the insertion of the more daring passages in the edition of 1868 that led to the success of the book after the first edition had been sold off at a penny per copy. That is probably an overstatement of the nature of the process, in which new æsthetic appreciations played a part; but it is clear that a new response to anti-theistic thought was involved.

14. A not very dissimilar phase of mental fashion was the new taste for Marcus Aurelius, as translated by an excellent scholar who did not cultivate literary art in rendering a work which employs none. George Long (1800–79), successively professor of Greek and of Latin at University College, London, after having been a youthful professor of the ancient languages at the University of Virginia (1824-8), calls for commemoration here as a rationalist. At twenty-one he had been bracketed as Craven scholar with Macaulay and Malden at Trinity College, Cambridge; and after winning other distinctions he gained a fellowship over the heads of those corrivals. His version of Marcus Aurelius holds its ground as the

[1] This is recognized in recent criticism—e.g., that of Mr. H. Nicholson. A scrutiny of the poem suggests that Tennyson felt it required a *coda* after "turns again home," and that, yielding to his old habit of popular appeal, he penned an incongruous one. His lines in an earlier song—

Sun, rain, and sun, and where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes—

are the finer.

[2] *Life*, 1-vol. ed. p. 763.

[3] *History*, ii, 293.

most competent in English; and his translations of Epictetus and of Plutarch's 'Lives' are hardly less esteemed. He stands out for us as having indicated his rationalism there, as in the massive 'Decline of the Roman Republic'[1] (5 vols. 1864–74), a work of wide and accurate learning which missed popularity only by lack of literary charm, he having concerned himself solely for that historic value which won the praise of Matthew Arnold.[2] That "no one ever lived the life recommended by Marcus Aurelius more completely"; and that with all his load of learning he rendered large and manifold service to popular education, are among his many titles to remembrance.

§ 5

Of the imaginative literature of the United States the same generalization as to a change of intellectual climate holds broadly good. The incomparable Hawthorne, even in exhibiting in his greatest work his psychological penetration into the Puritan past, dissolved instead of making good its conventional prestige; and, whatever his own doctrinal beliefs, was essentially a modernist. The apparent lack of sympathy between him and Emerson may be explained rather by Emerson's æsthetic limitations than by Hawthorne's in any other direction. Poe, though he did not venture till his days of downfall to write his *Eureka*, thereby proves himself an entirely non-Christian theist or polytheist-pantheist; and Emerson's poetry, no less than his prose, constantly expresses his pantheism; while his gifted disciple Thoreau, in some ways a more stringent thinker than his master, was either a pantheist or a Lucretian theist, standing aloof from all churches.[3] Even the sentimentally theistic Walt Whitman stands for a thoroughly naturalistic view of life;[4] W. D. Howells appears to have been at most a theist; Henry James, despite his effective incursion into *diablerie*, did not even exhibit the bias of his gifted brother to the theism of their no less gifted father; and some of the most esteemed men of letters since the Civil War, as Dr. Wendell Holmes and Colonel Wentworth Higginson, have been avowedly on the side of rationalism, or, as the term goes in the States, "liberalism."[5] Though the tone of ordinary conversation is more often reminiscent of

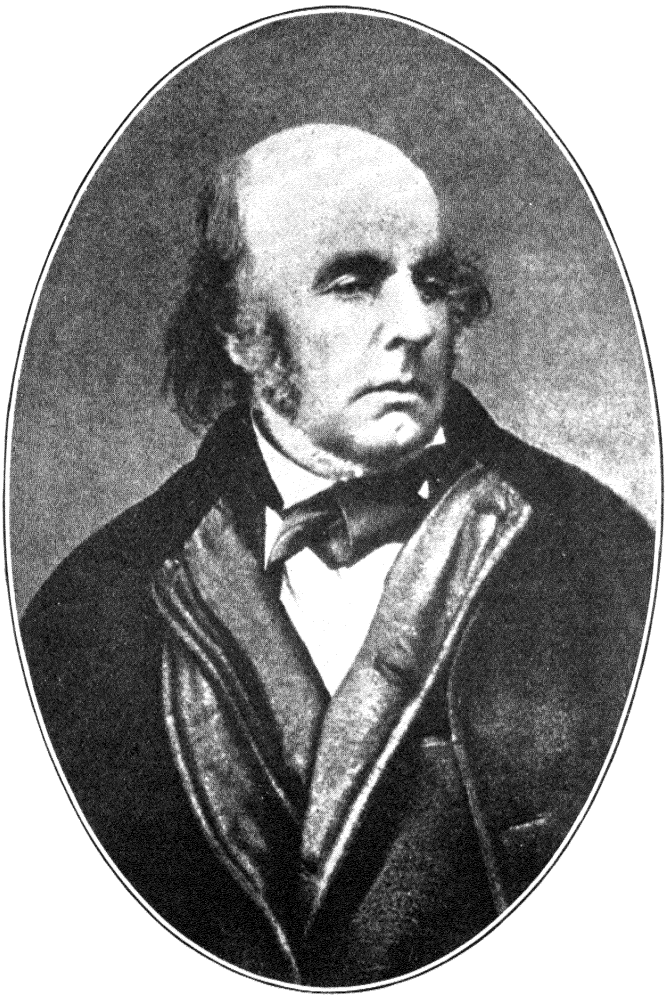
[1] Cp. i, 345–7, and the note on p. 449 of his translation of Plutarch's *Brutus*, Bohn ed. of *Lives*, vol. iv.

[2] Cp. art. in *D. N. B.*

[3] See *Talks with Emerson*, by C. J. Woodbury, 1890, pp. 93–4.

[4] It was in his old age that Whitman tended most to "theize" Nature. In conversation with Dr. Moncure Conway he once used the expression that "the spectacle of a mouse is enough to stagger a sextillion of infidels." Dr. Conway replied: "And the sight of the cat playing with the mouse is enough to set them on their feet again"; whereat Whitman tolerantly smiled.

[5] "Radicalism," which in Britain means advanced Liberalism in politics, in the States stands for Anarchism and Bolshevism. Curious misunderstandings have arisen in consequence.



EDWARD FITZGERALD

Reproduced from "Some New Letters of Edward Fitzgerald", Edited by F. R. Barton, C.M.G. (Williams and Norgate)

religion in the United States than in England, the novel and the newspaper were there perhaps more early secularized than here.[1]

The case of Mark Twain, which will be discussed in a later chapter, serves finally to indicate the contrary pressures. His writings as a whole certainly gave no support to pietism, and he was a special favourite among freethinkers. The humorist (Ambrose Bierce) who came into notice as "Dod Grile" was naturally even more so, with his early *Nuggets and Dust* and *Fiend's Delight* and *Cobwebs from an Empty Skull* (1873).

§ 6

A special sociological interest attaches to the evolution of *belles lettres* in Spain in the century of transformation. There the forces of intellectual arrest had been as destructive in the field of literary art as in that of critical thought. Drama, fatally patronized by the Court while antagonized by the Church, sank after Calderon to a non-literary level, being even in his hands partly reduced to a cheap mechanism;[2] and poetry at the beginning of the new century had so completely lost all inspiration that Ticknor at the close of his work surveys the prospects of Spanish literature in general with dubiety.[3] Treading the *via dolorosa* of restored tyranny under "the worst of Spanish kings," Ferdinand VII, weighted down with the burden of a lamentable past, Spanish literary art nevertheless found renascence while the hand of tyranny still lay heavy on the spirit of thought. "The banishment or flight of almost every Spaniard of liberal opinions or intellectual distinction had one result which might have been foreseen if there had been a clear-sighted man in the reactionary party. It brought to an end the period of cut-and-dry classical domination. The exiles returned with new ideals in literature as well as in politics. There was a restless ferment of the libertarian, romantic spirit."[4]

It was in fiction, the special literary art of the century, that the new spirit ultimately made good. While no freethinking book could appear, the novelist could produce pictures of life that should subtly reveal the movement of things, As has been observed in another connection, "all great art is so because it is of itself alive and germinal, and the august art of speech has its sap and sustenance like the rest from the eternal fountains of change, which urge for ever the pulses of man's mind as surely as the wheeling of the suns." Necessarily, the first stirrings in Spain were in the ratio of the new life, and the restraints of the old. In the hands of the woman-writer who signed herself "Fernan Caballero"

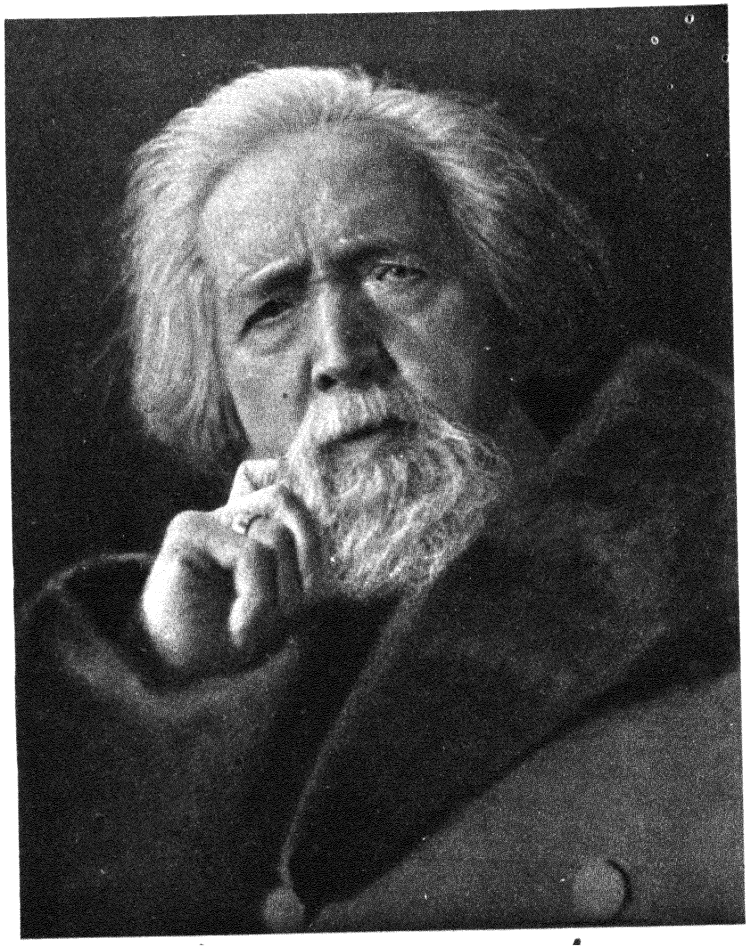
[1] Cp. Goblet d'Alviella, *The Contemporary Evolution of Religious Thought in England, America, and India*, Eng. trans. 1885, chs. ix and x.

[2] Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, ed. 1863, iii, 362–4; James Fitzmaurice Kelly, *Chapters on Spanish Literature*, 1908, pp. 229–30.

[3] Ticknor, as cited, iii, 372. [4] Fitzmaurice Kelly, as cited, p. 232.

(*née* Von Faber) the temper of the old orthodoxy is obtrusive ; and in the stronger work of José Maria de Pereda (1833–1906) it is so even to the point of a propaganda of intolerance. Where it operates thus dogmatically, in both writers, it lames their art as would a contrary didacticism, though the style and the dramatic vision of Pereda give him classic status. The sounder course of criticizing life solely by the representation of it was taken by Juan Valéra (1824–1905), whose *Pepita Jiménez* (1874) captivated the critics of the New and the Old World by its sparkling realism. At the close of the century he was recognized as the most prominent man of letters in Spain, though an "aristocratic scepticism" coloured all his work.

On a larger scale Benito Pérez Galdos has illustrated in forty volumes of *Episodios Nacionales* "the political and social evolution of Spain from the time of Charles IV to the time of the Republic." It is all visibly the work of a liberal, yet with no such resort to dogmatism as marks some of the books of Pereda ; the series is simply intelligently pictorial, and the Spaniards who have made the journey are thereby modernized whether they would or not. In Spain as elsewhere there have been æsthetic feuds between realists and anti-realists, the Condesa Pardo Bazan on the realist side and Palacio Valdés on the other being representative performers ; but that dispute involves no commitments of opinion, as Pereda may be termed a realist. Inasmuch as some novelists take sides in politics, the question of clericalism is apt to be involved ; and Vicente Blasco Ibañez, the most widely read of recent Spanish novelists, has held politics to be as much his business as art, though he could keep them separate. The significant thing is that by way of fiction the life of Spain has been held up to the eyes of its people in such a fashion that ecclesiasticism can less than ever hope to dominate their future.



G. J. Holyoake

G. J. HOLYOAKE

Chapter XI

FREETHOUGHT ORGANIZATION

§ 1

While a new critical literature was extending freethought among all classes there was proceeding in England an organized propaganda which appealed primarily, by way of Sunday lectures, to working men, yet with no class doctrine. Such propaganda may be said to be a British specialty. In France and Italy freethought had long been practically associated with democratic politics, the combination being organized in Freemasonic lodges. In England, where Freemasonry was nominally theistic, and where the tradition of spoken freethought propaganda went back to Peter Annet, the platform had become as much the natural method as were journals and books; and after the decline of the Owenite movement its platform practice was turned to the account of a freethought always associated with democracy, and therefore odious to the apprehensive among the upper classes, but treating the religious issue on its merits.

Such a movement was freshly organized by George Jacob Holyoake, the former Owenite missionary, who in 1851 first used the term "Secularist" as correctly expressing the attitude of the rationalist towards religions which affirmed Divine Providence and Immortality. It was he who in 1852 convened at Manchester a Conference which led to the establishment of various Secularist groups and ultimately of the National Secular Society. Holyoake's efficiency as a publicist had been dramatically established by his winning in 1845, against seventy-nine competitors, some of them clergymen, all five of a set of £10 prizes offered by the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows for the five best essays on Charity, Truth, Knowledge, Science, and Progression. After that uncommon success[1] he started in London, in 1846, his journal *The Reasoner*, which he conducted on good literary lines for fifteen years, while doing much other journalistic and propagandist work. The creation of a "Secularist" organization was the outcome of social and dialectic difficulties over the terms "atheism" and "atheistic," as to which his attitude had varied, though his opinions remained atheological.

[1] It was something of a scandal to orthodoxy, though all the essays were neutral to religion; and one sympathizer with the scheme, who had in advance offered £50 for the copyrights, withdrew his offer when it was discovered that Holyoake had won all the prizes.

Those terms had indeed always been obstructive of a hearing for freethought, deistic or theistic beliefs being held on emotional grounds, and inspiring à priori a strong emotional aversion from their denial. "Atheist" was in fact an opprobrious epithet for most literary and social purposes. "Secularism," on the other hand, was a logical antithesis to the "Sacredism" of religion; and only the most pugnacious were in general disposed to accept the label of "infidel," with its insolent connotations, though Miss Hennell made no demur in 1857. Unless "infidel" could be paired with "fidel," another name seemed desirable, and "Secularist," logically used, was as good as any, though if "Agnostic" had been offered in 1852 Holyoake would perhaps have adopted it. Paine's "Religion of Humanity," again, had been taken over by Comte for a cult of sacraments and ritual, and was thus barred for normal freethinkers. "Secularism," in contrast, was no bad choice.

As Holyoake argued, the atheistic position was really a simple and truly philosophic denial of the possibility of knowledge of the alleged supernatural; and the logical outcome was an application of reason to the problems of possible knowledge and actual life. And such a view, he contended, might be endorsed by the believers in a Theos regarded as Unknowable. It is not known, however, that any such adherents ever arose; and inasmuch as he accused Theism of "obstructing secular life," and the term Secular*ism* obviously implied theoretic grounds, involving the dismissal of all theories of Divine Providence, the adherence of theists was not reasonably to be expected. Holyoake, however, appears to have hoped for such support; and he entailed some perplexity on his movement by writing sympathetically in terms of Francis Newman's phrase about movement towards "a possible God."

Formally and correctly he maintained that "Atheism is reason putting questions to theology";[1] declaring further: "I can conceive of nothing beyond Nature, distinct from it, and above it."[2] At the same time he argued that "the term Cosmism should supersede the misleading term Atheism, just as Secularism had superseded the libellous term Infidelity";[3] and in the preface to the 1878 edition of the *Trial of Theism* he wrote: "My chief fear is that the book seems to me to make too much of Atheism, which really appears to me a little thing compared with the mightier knowledge and secular uses of the universe." His chief concern, in fact, was social reform, rather than the exposure of the falsity in religious history or the obstructive effect which he charged upon religious doctrine in practice. The scholarly side of the debate had for him no great attraction.

A natural result was trouble among Secularists who felt that rebuttal of the claims of religion was the vital concern of freethinkers, and who asked why, if it were not, there need be any Secular*ist* organization at

[1] *Trial of Theism*, ed. 1878, p. 98. [2] *Id.* p. 200. [3] *Id.* p. 242.

all, as distinct from co-operative and other movements of social betterment. Working men, and indeed Englishmen in general, are not as a rule fascinated by verbal fence; and the Secularists were not at all anxious to be called Cosmists—a term lending itself unduly to ribaldry. Nor did the trouble end there. Holyoake's ingenious dialectic about a "pantheistic spiritualist" movement towards a possible God, and about the inadequacy of negation, created restiveness, while raising hopes among "pantheistic spiritualists" who thought highly of Holyoake and strove to convert him.[1] Plain men who noted that the ten commandments consisted mainly of negations, and saw that every reform movement necessarily negated the existing order, were not captured by the negation of negation, unless they merely desired a quiet life. Such quietists, clearly, had better withdraw.

It was thus to be expected that the Presidency of the London Secular Society should ere long be transferred from Holyoake to Charles Bradlaugh (1833–91), who in 1858 was already being recognized as the most powerful exponent of militant freethought in England. Holyoake never ceased to associate himself actively with freethought propaganda, and remained one of its ablest writers; but for platform purposes he was in a measure eclipsed by the extraordinary oratorical and debating power of the new recruit.

Regretful Christians have described Bradlaugh as having been "made an atheist" by the senseless persecution of his Anglican pastor at Hoxton.[2] Promoted at the age of fifteen to the status of Sunday-school teacher, and invited to prepare himself for confirmation by the Bishop, the boy respectfully asked for help over some difficulties he had found in the gospels and the Articles; whereupon his pastor suspended him for "atheistical" tendencies. Shunning church under this ban, the lad wandered to the fields where on Sundays freethinkers debated in the open-air, and gallantly defended his creed, still warmly held. Finding himself logically driven to give up the inspiration of the Bible, he became a deist, as so many freethinkers had done before him, and adventurously proceeded to bring *that* view to his pastor's notice, with the result that the indignant cleric, by reckless threats and pressure on the parents, brought about the boy's removal from his home. His attempts to earn an independent living elicited further manifestations of religious hostility; and precocious lecturing yielded a very minute income. Finally, he enlisted as a dragoon, a step which moved his troubled father to reconciliation. They never met again, the father dying soon afterwards.

[1] A pamphlet on *George Jacob Holyoake and Modern Atheism*, by Sophia Dobson Collet (1855), gives a very sympathetic account of Holyoake's career, and denounces the scurrilities of one of his opponents, the Rev. Brewin Grant, a prominent Christian champion of the period.

[2] Details in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Life* and in the present writer's *Charles Bradlaugh* (R. P. A.).

An opportune legacy in 1853 enabled his mother to buy him out of the army.

It was after two years of cavalry life, which gave him a good physique, that the youth, now really an atheist as well as a zealous teetotaller, found employment in a lawyer's office as "errand boy," and after nine months was in full charge of his employer's Common Law business. He then resumed his lecturing activities on Sundays under the *nom de guerre* of "Iconoclast," his employer naturally requiring such a precaution. The life on which he now entered was one of quixotic devotion to the cause of truth-speaking for its own sake. For a good many years, being always thwarted in his attempts to become an articled solicitor, he supported himself by commercial undertakings; but, in addition to losses from the "Black Friday" crash of 1866, he met with others, and many special difficulties, through the proclivity of orthodox men of business to injure him, and of nominally orthodox practitioners to defraud him. Chronically he was being foully libelled by clerics and others. Costly litigation was forced on him by a fraudulent dealer in bills, who challenged his evidence as that of an unbeliever; and when after two years he won his case the debtor went into bankruptcy. The Evidence Amendment Act of 1869 was the first reform secured by his experience in that matter. Without his skill in law, then and later, he would have gone to the wall.

In 1858 he became for a year editor of the freethinking weekly, *The Investigator*, giving it up from bad health and money difficulties; and bad health again compelled him to devolve on others the editing of *The National Reformer*, which he founded in 1860. Returning to it in 1866, he became President of the newly-founded National Secular Society; and in those capacities he carried on his work as a militant freethinker, always alongside of that of a Radical politician, for nearly a quarter of a century. As a simple politician, he would speedily have come to the front, in despite of his proclamation of republicanism, being a singularly powerful orator and debater and a quite unmatched fighter; but the unflinching hostility to current religion, further conjoined with a steady defence of the principle of Birth Control, long delayed the advent to Parliament which was to mean the crowning chapter of his career.

As a freethinking leader he built up a large organization, and made many thousands of converts, most of whom had for him a deep and lasting personal devotion—shared by the many thousands more who were attracted not by his freethinking but by his politics.[1] In the main self-taught, he acquired a large measure of culture in French and English, and his rare natural gift for debate was sharpened by a legal training. A personal admirer of Owen, he never accepted his social polity, but was

[1] The great majority of his constituents at Northampton were either churchgoers or non-active unbelievers. There, after becoming a candidate, he never spoke on religious matters.

at all times the most zealous of democratic reformers. Thenceforward the working masses in England were in large part kept in touch with a freethought which drew on the results of the scientific and scholarly research of the time, and wielded a dialectic of which trained opponents confessed the power. In place of the bland dogmatism of Owen, and the calm assumption that all mankind could and should be schoolmastered into happiness and order, there came the alert recognition of the absoluteness of individualism as regards conviction, and its present pre-potency as regards social arrangements. Every thesis was brought to the test of argument and evidence; and in due course many who had complained that Owen would not argue, complained that the new school argued everything. The essential thing was that the people were receiving vitally needed instruction; and were being taught with a new power to think for themselves. Incidentally they were freed from an old burden by Bradlaugh's successful resistance to the demand of suretyship from newspapers, and by his no less successful battle for the right of non-theistic witnesses to make affirmation instead of taking the oath in the law courts.[1]

There was little money to be made by Sunday lecturing on the Secularist platform; and most of those who took up the adventure had to earn their living in other ways. Like Bradlaugh, they were commonly described by the pious as seeking pelf on the platform. Often they undertook debates—though no one was in that field so prominent as Bradlaugh. Holyoake, the wittiest, was always a favourite lecturer with many. The inspiration and the instruction of the popular movement thus maintained were at once literary, scientific, ethical, historical, scholarly, and philosophic. Shelley was its poet; Voltaire its first story-teller; and Gibbon its favourite historian. In philosophy, Bradlaugh learned less from Hume than from Spinoza; in Biblical criticism—himself possessing a working knowledge of Hebrew—he collated the work of English and French specialists, down to and including Colenso, applying all the while to the consecrated record the tests of a consistent ethic.[2] At the same time, the whole battery of argument from the natural sciences was turned against traditionalism and supernaturalism, alike in the lectures of Bradlaugh and the other speakers of his party, and in the pages of his journal, *The National Reformer*. On that he had the loyal collaboration of Holyoake's younger brother Austin (1826–74), who wrote many pamphlets, and won many friends by his sterling qualities. The general outcome was an unprecedented diffusion of critical thought among the English masses, and a proportionate antagonism to those who had wrought such a result.

[1] See Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh*, i, 149, 288–9.

[2] His volume *Genesis*, the most detailed, yet incomplete, portion of a survey of the Bible of which previous editions had gone much further, had been undertaken as a useful discipline in the years of his parliamentary battle.

In the *Reformer* one of the most esteemed contributors, the late Joseph Hiam Levy, an official in the Education Office, was shrouded from notoriety under the initial "D." Economist, thinker, logician, Hebraist, his work as a whole was of exceptional competence, his knowledge being as exact as his method, and his style of a high finish. His acute and brilliant dialectic won the special approbation of Professor Bain, who read him regularly. Bradlaugh's own systematic doctrine, with that of Mrs. Annie Besant in her rationalist period, is to be gathered from their joint 'Freethinker's Text-Book.' Mrs. Besant had had her special experience of the freethought battle, which gave her an added distinction in the eyes of the militants whom she swayed by her eloquence. Secured the custody of her children under a marital deed of separation, she was deprived of it at law (1879) on her avowal of Neo-Malthusian and atheistic opinions, with the result that her influence as a propagandist was immensely increased. Her part of the Text-Book, which went through three editions, was entitled 'Christianity: Its Evidences: Its Origin: Its Morality: Its History,' and a powerful polemic it is. The Third Part, 'The History of Freethought,' the first systematic survey of the kind, was contributed by their then colleague the elder Charles Watts, still remembered as a genial and eloquent lecturer. Bradlaugh's Part (I) was 'Man: Whence and How?; Religion: What and Why?'—a terse and closely woven tissue of argument, which may be read for a knowledge of his thought as apart from his oratory.[1] The analysis of the latest theistic argument, as put in an unsigned article in the *British Quarterly Review* of July, 1871, by the late Professor William Knight, will in particular serve to show Bradlaugh's analytical and logical efficiency. His own constantly repeated position was that "denial of the existence of God" is a wholly vacuous form of words, when God = x. As he wrote in his journal in 1862:—

> Denial of God is Netheism. An Atheist says, I am ignorant; I do not know what you mean by the word; I am without any idea of God: to me the word God is a word conveying no meaning. The Bible God I deny; the Christian God I disbelieve in; but I am not rash enough to say there is no God as long as you tell me you are unprepared to define God to me.

His lecture on Spinoza, a masterly performance, was probably beyond the critical grasp of the average theist who listened to it, but its cogency was recognized by some competent clerics. The majority of the order, and a number of the academics who judged him by hearsay, professed to regard him as a "Bible-smasher," such being the inexpensive device prized by many who knew his exposure of the history and ethic of the Sacred Book to be unanswerable, but were not ashamed of complicity in the practice of delivering it to the nations of the earth, and the children of their own, as the supreme collection of irrefragable truth. Feeling

[1] That may be partly appreciated from his theological debates,

as he did about truth, and the right of the people to be enlightened, Bradlaugh did his work by many ways besides exposure of the Bible, but cared absolutely nothing for either the scowls or the sneers of men who belittled such work as his. He was much better informed, as well as much better endowed and trained for controversy, than most of his educated gainsayers. It was Professor Flint, a doughty enough defender of theism, who wrote :—

> There is an impression in some quarters that atheism is advocated in a weak and unskilful manner by the chiefs of secularism. It is an impression in which I do not share. Most of the writers who are striving to diffuse atheism in literary circles are not to be compared in intellectual strength with either Mr. Holyoake or Mr. Bradlaugh.[1]

This testimony was not very usefully countered by those who wrathfully retorted by denying the critical competence of Professor Flint. In his criticism of Bradlaugh he had rashly written that "Mr. Bradlaugh here confounds reason with reasoning. No intelligent man thinks or speaks of God as reasoning." Acute embarrassment was endured by clerical and other defenders of the faith when challenged in this connection to explain Isaiah i, 18—"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord"—and the 38th chapter of Job. There followed unseemly suggestions that in the opinion of Professor Flint God is—or has—Reason, but has never used it. But the Professor had only added one to the list of exposures of anthropomorphic anomalies which had been piled up for theism before and after Mansel ; and his *Anti-Theistic Theories* did only the usual disservice to the defence by calling attention to its irremovable difficulties.

Competent readers knew that the testimonial to Holyoake and Bradlaugh was fully deserved. Bradlaugh had an efficacy of which the academic men who repugned him were not aware. He appealed to capable minds which were not under the delusive belief that a university training gives men in general an adequate faculty for thinking. He was in fact a more qualified thinker than most even of the university men who in his day stood for rationalism. More masculine than the Mark Pattisons of the cloister, more clear-seeing than the Goldwin Smiths, who blundered on to agnosticism through much wasteful polemic against rationalism, he thought harder and better than those academics. Never guilty of the poor tactic of belittling, as did Stephen and Morley and others, freethinkers of the past on the score that they were either poor or pugnacious—as if poverty were a stigma, and hard-hitting against brutal enemies an unworthy thing—he was really a stronger as well as a more knightly fighter than they. When Morley thought fit to write that Bradlaugh had

[1] *Anti-Theistic Theories*, ed. 1899, pp. 518–9.

"a strong love of truth according to his own lights,"[1] he evoked from independent readers the comment that his own lights had been pretty frequently erratic, like his course. Morley's freethinking books are flawed with self-contradiction: Bradlaugh's debating was not. He was the more expert and consistent logician and the better-trained philosopher of the two. Morley's distinction was one of literary style rather than of logical mastery.

These facts are to be faced. The snobberies of English life, which include the assumption that a university man is to be given in all matters intellectual higher marks in advance than a man self-trained, and that the man of the people ought to be content to be aspersed without retaliating, must be excluded at least from the freethinker's seat of judgment. It is perfectly true that Spencer, the "autodidact," and Mill, the home-educated man, at times lapsed as thinkers into fallacy and inconsistency, but they could more than hold their own against the university men of their day. Mill modestly said that his chief advantage lay in having been better educated than the men of the universities in his youth; but he had the further great advantage of escaping the academic illusion of automatic superiority. If the university men of to-day are better trained they owe it in some degree to those outside. And Bradlaugh found in the arena of debate a regimen which made him alert to the errors of the bookmen on his own side, having, to start with, a high competence for close thinking. He never "put on airs"; he lived up to the code of "the rendering and receiving of reasons."

He knew his ground, in short, alike in matters of Biblical criticism, relevant science, ecclesiastical history, theological logic, hierology, and moral and abstract philosophy, better than most of the consciously superior men who looked down on him, and incomparably better than most of the clerics who assailed or debated with him. That his audience was chiefly made up of "plain men," seeking reasoned truth, and little concerned about the cheaper social respectabilities, was the result of his choice and his circumstances. And the choice was not a bad one, as choices go. His courage drew the men who valued courage; and if he repelled more sensitive spirits (there were exceptions even there) he also repelled snobs and weaklings. And when it came to the last long battle his choice was vindicated by the event, as life goes.

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, iii, 11. Morley adds phrases about Bradlaugh's "hard-grit secularism" and "blank negation," which came oddly from one who had spelt 'God' with a small g, offering no such reasons for his course as Bradlaugh had abundantly given for his atheism. He further accounts for Bradlaugh's formal claim to affirm by remarking that he "was a little vain of his legal skill." Morley ought to have been aware that, before claiming, Bradlaugh had consulted the not-yet-appointed law officers of the new Government, and learned that they acquiesced in his view.

It is necessary to add here an explicit comment on the charge of "coarseness" laid against Bradlaugh by the late Canon Liddon, and later, in respect of his journal, by Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Liddon had the political rectitude to admit (letter to Dr. Dale, cited by the Hon. G. W. E. Russell in his monograph, *Dr. Liddon*, 1905, p. 166) that Bradlaugh ought to have been admitted to the House of Commons in 1880. This pronouncement, which Mr. Russell describes as "an agreeable surprise," the Canon accompanied by avowals that "we both know, or have known, members of the House who are not Theists, who have no scruple about taking the oath," and that the House "contains misbelievers and unbelievers in large numbers." He added, however, that the only difference between the positions of Mill and Bradlaugh was that "the latter is coarse and repulsive"; that "Mr. Bradlaugh's real offence is not his Atheism, but the coarseness which accompanies it"; and that "his wretched books have now an enormous circulation."

It is here compulsory to say that the Canon's language is a standing illustration of that evil coarsening of the moral sense that is wrought in many pious men by their piety, inasmuch as he had no knowledge whatever of Bradlaugh as a lecturer, and used the pious term "wretched books" with no knowledge of these. Bradlaugh's part of 'The Freethinker's Text-Book,' a model of perfectly restrained argument, will be found by readers who care to examine it a much more readable as well as an incomparably more intellectual performance than anything of Canon Liddon's. To asperse without knowledge is of course so constant a characteristic of Christian polemic that Liddon is not here to be specially branded, though his illustration of the Christian conception of love for enemies deserves special record in view of his high religious pretensions. Few Anglican priests of his day, indeed, were more bitterly and widely censorious of their fellows.

On the point of coarseness the present writer, who heard Bradlaugh lecture many times and knew him intimately, may perhaps stake his personal credit against that of Canon Liddon and Mr. G. K. Chesterton. The assertion of the latter that Bradlaugh's journal propounded "coarse materialism" is a Catholic example of the morality of faith. Bradlaugh was a declared Monist, and J. H. Levy was a stringent opponent of what generally passes current as materialism. The standards of the journal as regards coarseness of any kind were considerably higher than Mr. Chesterton's. Bradlaugh on the platform was absolutely free from coarseness. He sometimes gave a humorous lecture, comparable with some of the writings of Mark Twain; but he was never guilty of a coarse expression; and in his private conversation he was singularly free from the average laxity of men of the world. It may be edifying, in conclusion, to

observe that in the opinion of Professor Henry Nettleship "Liddon's style is vulgar" (Russell, as cited, p. 189). It is interesting to note that Mr. Russell nevertheless (p. 195) reckons him a Christian Saint.

When Bradlaugh at length took the oath and his seat in 1886, under a ruling of the new Speaker (Peel) which stultified the whole action of the Speaker and majorities of the previous Parliament, and no less that of the law courts, straightforward freethought stood three-fold stronger in England than in any previous generation. Apart from their educative work, the struggles and sufferings of the secularist leaders won for Great Britain the abolition within one generation of the old burden of suretyship on newspapers, and of the disabilities of non-theistic witnesses; the freedom of public meeting in the London parks; the right of avowed atheists to sit in Parliament (Bradlaugh having secured in 1888 their title to make affirmation instead of oath); and the virtual discredit of the Blasphemy Laws as such.

The National Secular Society, built up by Bradlaugh, who was succeeded in the presidential post shortly before his death by G. W. Foote (succeeded in turn by Mr. Chapman Cohen), subsists to this day. One of Mr. Foote's services to his cause was the discovery (1898) that by formal establishment as a company the Society could legally receive bequests, a right denied it as a simple propagandist body. Bequests so made had always been disallowed in the law courts. The genius of English law, which sees in a clerical incumbency a form of property, now bestowed in terms of "business" and finance the protection it had refused to an organization aiming simply at the diffusion of truth. Thus become capable of endowment, Secularism can subsist as Churches do.

Other organizations being similarly stabilized, the continuous work done by Bradlaugh as journalist and editor has likewise been carried on. A series of monthly or weekly publications of an emphatically freethinking sort has been nearly continuous from about 1840,[1] new ones rising in place of those which succumbed to the commercial difficulties. Such periodicals suffer an economic pinch in that they cannot hope for much income from advertisements, which are the chief sustenance of popular journals and magazines. The same law holds elsewhere; but in England and America the high-priced reviews had been gradually opened to rationalistic articles, the way being led by the English *Westminster Review*[2] and *Fortnightly Review*, both founded with an eye to freer discussion.

[1] Before 1840 the popular freethought propaganda had been partly carried on under cover of Radicalism, as in Carlile's papers, and in various publications of William Hone. Cp. H. B. Wilson's article, "The National Church," in *Essays and Reviews*, 9th ed. p. 152.

[2] Described as "our chief atheistic organ" by the late F. W. Newman "because Dr. James Martineau declined to continue writing for it, *because* it interpolated atheistical articles between his theistic articles" (*Contributions.....to the early history of the late Cardinal Newman*, 1891, p. 103). The review was for a time edited by

Among the earlier freethinking periodicals may be noted *The Republican*, 1819–26 (edited by Carlile); *The Deist's Magazine*, 1820; *The Lion*, 1828 (Carlile); *The Prompter*, 1830 (Carlile); *The Gauntlet*, 1833 (Carlile); *The Atheist and Republican*, 1841–2; *The Blasphemer*, 1842; *The Oracle of Reason* (founded by Southwell), 1842, etc.; *The Movement*, 1843; *The Reasoner* and *Herald of Progress* (largely conducted by Holyoake), 1846–61; *Cooper's Journal; or, Unfettered Thinker*, etc., 1850, etc.; *The Freethinker's Information for the People* (undated: after 1841); *Freethinker's Magazine*, 1850, etc.; *London Investigator*, 1854, etc. Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*, begun in 1860, lasted only till 1893, his personal influence having been its main source of circulation. Mr. Foote's *Freethinker*, begun in 1881, still subsists. Various freethinking monthlies have risen and fallen since 1880—a period in which, it will be remembered, a number of literary magazines of good standing disappeared under changing market conditions, their places being taken by organs of lower status. The chief freethinking magazines were: *Our Corner*, edited by Mrs. Besant, 1883–8; *The Liberal* and *Progress*, both edited by Mr. Foote, 1879–87; the *Free Review*, transformed into the *University Magazine*, 1893–8, and *The Reformer*, a monthly, edited by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, which subsisted from 1897 to 1904. *The Literary Guide*, which began as a small sheet in 1885, flourishes. For fifty years back, further, rationalistic essays have appeared from time to time not only in the *Fortnightly Review* (founded by G. H. Lewes, and long edited by John [later Lord] Morley, much of whose writing on the French *philosophes* appeared in its pages), but in the *Nineteenth Century*, wherein was carried on, for instance, a famous controversy between Mr. Gladstone and Professor Huxley. In the early 'seventies, the *Cornhill Magazine*, under the editorship of Leslie Stephen, issued serially Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, *Literature and Dogma*, and *St. Paul and Protestantism*. In the latter years of the century a number of other monthly reviews, some of them short-lived, gave space to advanced opinion.

§ 2

In Germany freethought organization never reached the dimensions of the movement in England, by reason of the political conditions. The clerical and official reaction in the fourth and fifth decades did provoke counter-reaction; and already in 1846 official interference with freedom of utterance led to the formation of a "free religious" society by Dr. Rupp, of Königsberg, one of the "Friends of Light" in the State Church,

J. S. Mill, and for long after him by Dr. John Chapman. It lasted into the twentieth century, under the editorship of Dr. Chapman's widow, and kept a free platform to the end.

who was followed by Wislicenus of Halle, a Hegelian, and by Uhlich of Magdeburg.[1] As a result of the determined pressure, social and official, which ensued on the collapse of the revolution of 1848, these societies failed to develop on the scale of their beginnings; and that of Magdeburg, which at the outset had 7,000 members, had latterly only 500; though that of Berlin had nearly 4,000.[2] There was further a *Freidenker Bund*, with branches in many towns; and the two organizations, with their total membership of some fifty thousand, may be held to have represented the militant side of popular freethought in pre-War Germany. This, however, constituted only a fraction of the total amount of passive rationalism. There was a large measure of enlightenment in both the working and the middle classes; and the ostensible force of orthodoxy among the official and conformist middle class was in many respects illusory. The German police laws of the Empire put a rigid check on all manner of platform and press propaganda which could be indicted as hurting the feelings of religious people; so that a jest at the Holy Coat of Trèves could even send a journalist to jail, and the platform work of the militant societies was closely trammelled. Yet there were during the later years of the century over a dozen journals which, so far as might be, took the freethought side;[3] and the whole stress of Bismarckian reaction and of official orthodoxy under the ex-Kaiser never availed to make the tone of popular thought pietistic.

Some index to the amount of popular freethought that normally existed under the surface in Germany was furnished, further, by the strength of the German freethought movement in the United States, where, despite the tendency to the adoption of the common speech, there grew up in the last quarter of the nineteenth century many German free-thinking societies, a German federation of atheists, and a vigorous popular organ, *Der Freidenker*. The War, of course, ended these.

It is a significant fact that freethought propaganda is often most active in countries where the Catholic Church is most powerful. Thus in Belgium, at the end of the century, there were three separate federations, standing for hundreds of freethinking "groups"; in Spain there were freethought societies in all the large towns, and at least half-a-dozen freethought journals; in Portugal there had been a number of societies—a weekly journal, *O Secolo*, of Lisbon, and a monthly review, *O Livre Exame*. In France and Italy, where educated society is in

[1] Cotterill, as cited, pp. 43–7.

[2] Rapport de Ida Altmann, in *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906, p. 20.

[3] The principal have been: *Das freie Wort* and *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Frankfort-on-Main; *Der Freidenker*, Friedrichshagen, near Berlin; *Der freireligiöses Sonntagsblatt*, Breslau; *Die freie Gemeinde*, Magdeburg; *Der Atheist*, Nuremberg; *Menschentum*, Gotha; *Vossische Zeitung*, Berlin; *Berliner Volkszeitung*, Berlin; *Vorwärts* (Socialist), Berlin; *Weser Zeitung*, Bremen; *Hartungsche Zeitung*, Königsberg; *Kölnische Zeitung*, Cologne.

large measure rationalistic, the Masonic lodges do most of the personal and social propaganda; but there were federations of freethought societies in both countries. In Switzerland freethought is more aggressive in the Catholic than in the Protestant cantons.[1]

§ 3

"Free Religious" societies, such as have been noted in Germany, may be rated as forms of moderate freethought propaganda, and are to be found in all Protestant countries, with all shades of development. A movement of the kind existed about a generation back in America, in the New England States and elsewhere, and may be held to represent a theistic or agnostic thought too advanced to adhere even to the Unitarianism which during the two middle quarters of the century was perhaps the predominant creed in New England. The Theistic Church conducted by the Rev. Charles Voysey after his expulsion from the Church of England in 1871 to his death in 1912 is an example. Voysey produced much propaganda. Another type of such a gradual and peaceful evolution is the South Place Institute (formerly "Chapel") of London, where, under the famous orator W. J. Fox, nominally a Unitarian, there was preached between 1824 and 1852 a theism tending to pantheism, perhaps traceable to elements in the doctrine of Priestley, and passed on by Fox to Robert Browning.[2] In 1864 the charge passed to Moncure D. Conway, under whom the congregation quietly advanced during twenty years from Unitarianism to a non-scriptural rationalism, embracing the shades of philosophic theism, agnosticism, and anti-theism. In Conway's *Lessons for the Day* will be found a series of peculiarly vivid mementos of that period, a kind of itinerary, more intimate than any retrospective record. The latter part of his life, partly preserved in one of the most interesting autobiographies of the century, was spent between England and the United States and in travel. After his first retirement to the States in 1884 the Institute became an open platform for rationalist and non-theological ethics and social and historical teaching, and it now stands as an "Ethical Society" in touch with the numerous groups so named which came into existence in England in the last decade of the century on lines originally laid down by Dr. Felix Adler in New York. Their open adherents, who were some thousands strong, were in most cases non-theistic rationalists, and included former members of the Secularist movement. On partly similar lines there were developed in provincial towns about the end of the century a small number of "Labour Churches," in which the tendency was to substitute a rationalist humanitarian ethic for supernaturalism; and the same lecturers frequently spoke

[1] *Rapport* of Ch. Fulpius in the *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906.

[2] Cp. Priestley, *Essay on the First Principles of Government*, 2nd ed. 1771, pp. 257–61, and Conway's *Centenary History of South Place*, pp. 63, 77, 80.

from their platforms and from those of Ethical and Secularist societies. The Labour Churches, however, were not long-lived, presumably by reason of opposition from ministers of Labour sympathies. The secularization of the Sunday, however, went on without arrest.

In the United States "Free Religious" Societies had for a time a specially active run. The habit of "going to meeting" appears to have struck even deeper roots in American life than that of church- and chapel-going in Britain; and when the doctrine of evolution had made large headway, multitudes of its new American adherents, finding ex-clergymen ready to minister to them, were ready to worship in some fashion "the mysterious Power of which the universe is a manifestation."[1] At the beginning of the ninth decade, "from New York to San Francisco, from Chicago to Cincinnati, every city of consequence had its metaphysical club or institute"; and in that soil Free Religious Associations might hope to flourish. They varied between Parkerian Theism or Pantheism and complete Spencerian agnosticism; and the survivors of the Transcendental movement of the middle decades, of which by 1880 there remained only one congregation,[2] seem to have sought the new folds.

The influence of Professor John Fiske, combining with that of the Spencerian propaganda, led to the adoption by many groups of the label "Cosmism," their members calling themselves Cosmists—or, more warily, "Cosmians," their formula being thus put by Mr. Potter of New Bedford:—

> Of religion as thought, the central idea is that of man's relation to the universe and to its vital forces; of religion as feeling, the central sentiment is that of obligation, imposed on man by the tie of vital relation; of religion as practice, the centre of action is man's effort to meet this obligation, and thus to put and keep himself in right relations with the universe and its vital powers.[3]
>
> Belief and trust in the universe. This is the corner-stone of our faith. If a new name were wanted for those who hold a faith thus grounded, why not call them Cosmians?[4]

A distinguished Unitarian minister, the Rev. Minot J. Savage, author of works on *The Religion of Evolution* (1876), *The Morality of Evolution* (1880), *Belief in God* (1881), and *Beliefs about Man* (1882), was prominent in the movement; and at a Free Religious Conference in 1881 he is found defending against Dr. Felix Adler, then described by some as an atheist, the social and utilitarian basis of morals, while Dr. Adler appears to have contended for something transcendental.[5] Mr. Savage had high hopes of evolving a "new religion" in terms of Spencerism, and his enthusiasm moved Spencer to write a letter looking forward to "something like a body of definite adherents who will become the germ of an

[1] Count Goblet d'Alviella, *The Contemporary Evolution of Religious Thought*, etc., Eng. tr. 1885, p. 210.
[2] *Id.* p. 213.
[3] *Id.* pp. 214–15, citing *The Index*, Jan. 5, 1882.
[4] *Id.* citing *The Index*, June 30, 1881.
[5] *Id.* p. 216.

organization."[1] This letter he gave Mr. Savage permission to publish; but at home we find him "excessively annoyed" when his publisher had been sending to his friends copies of a sermon which Mr. Savage had sent for distribution.[2] The express worship of the Unknowable under Spencer's auspices does not seem to have gone any further; but Free Religious Associations flourished for a time.

Their ultimate decadence might have been foreseen. Unless led by a critical purpose and interest—which in the case of Free Religious societies was not long encouraged—men go to churches for ritual and edification; and the ritual may take any form, as any qualified rhapsode can produce one for any doctrine. Ritual is notoriously repetible *ad infinitum*, with but the necessary intervals, by men at all stages of culture, like acts of appetite, labour, æsthesis, or play. Arrest is set up only by critical recoil. But when men have recoiled on critical grounds from the unthinking rituals of traditional prayer and praise, hypnotically sanctified, and proceed to new acts of ritual which ring the changes on "Cosmos," "Being," "He," "Universe," and "Necessary Relation," they challenge the same crisis. Either they awake to the futility of all ritual, as such, or they relapse to the hypnotic level which is natural to the ritualist. In the latter case, they may just as well resume the unthinking rituals of the already endowed congregations. In the former case they turn away from the congregatory routine. "New religions" are thus situated between Scylla and Charybdis.

Broadly speaking, organizations for the cultivation of curtailed religious creeds are found to suffer from the dissolvent forces which operate on the churches themselves. The majority of the men and women who give up positive religious beliefs tend to become indifferent rather than actively critical; and this detachment overtakes members of "free" associations in their turn. After worship and "divine service" have come to be regarded neither as duties to Deity nor as means to salvation in a future life, expatiation on abstract theism loses compulsive attraction; and to be eloquently told many times over that we are "in relation with the Cosmos," and ought to trust and reverence it, is an experience that tends to pall. Only those of the more thoughtful who realize the importance of disseminating sane opinion and rational views of ethics concern themselves about rationalistic organization of any kind; and it would appear that Ethical Societies which seek to avoid criticism of religion tend to be concerned chiefly with debate on social and political problems. An ethical movement seeking tests for conduct has an obvious superiority over a "Cosmism" which avowedly worships a "Power." But it in turn is drawn to politics, leaving rationalism to shift for itself. The task of removing religious delusion is thus left substantially to the organizations which definitely describe themselves as freethinking, secularist, or rationalist.

[1] Letter of Jan. 9, 1883, cited by Goblet d'Alviella, p. 220. [2] *Life*, p. 228.

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Unitarianism is not fitly to be classed under Freethought, inasmuch as many of its adherents would repudiate the implications, but it may here be indicated as a critical movement within limits. Alongside of the lines of movement before sketched, there has subsisted in England during the greater part of the nineteenth century a considerable organization of Unitarianism. In the early years of the century it was strong enough to obtain the repeal (1813) of the penal laws against anti-Trinitarianism, whereafter the use of the name "Unitarian" became more common, and a sect so called was founded formally in 1825. When the heretical preachers of the Presbyterian sect began openly to declare themselves as Unitarians, there naturally arose a protest from the orthodox, and an attempt was made in 1833 to save from its new destination the property owned by the heretical congregations.[1] This was frustrated by the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844, which gave to each group singly the power to interpret its trust in its own fashion. Thenceforward the sect prospered considerably, albeit not so greatly as in the United States.

During the century English Unitarianism has been associated with scholarship through such names as John Kenrick and Samuel Sharpe, the historians of Egypt, and J. J. Tayler; and, less directly, with philosophy in the person of Dr. James Martineau, who was rather a coadjutor than a champion of the sect. In the United States the movement, greatly aided to popularity by the eloquent humanism of the two Channings, lost the prestige of the name of Emerson, who had been one of its ministers, by the inability of his congregation to go the whole way with him in his opinions. In 1853 Emerson told the young Moncure Conway that "the Unitarian Churches were stated to be no longer producing ministers equal to their forerunners, but were more and more finding their best men in those coming from orthodox Churches," who "would, of course, have some enthusiasm for their new faith."[2] Latterly Unitarians have been entitled to say that the Trinitarian Churches are approximating to their position.[3] Such an approach, however, involved rather a weakening than a numerical strengthening of the smaller body; though some of its teachers had been as embittered in their propaganda as the bulk of the traditionally orthodox. Others adhere to their ritual practices in the spirit of use and wont, as Emerson found when he sought to rationalize in his own Church the usage of the eucharist.[4] On the other hand,

[1] See Rev. Joseph Hunter, *An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Henley's Foundations*, 1834; *The History, Opinions, and Present Legal Position of the English Presbyterians* (official), 1834; *An Examination and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, by the Rev. W. Hamilton Drummond, of Dublin, 1842.

[2] Conway, *Autobiography*, 1905, i, 123.

[3] So Prof. William James, *The Will to Believe*, etc., 1897, p. 133.

[4] Conway, *Emerson at Home and Abroad*, 1883, ch. vii.

numbers have passed from Unitarianism to thoroughgoing rationalism; and some whole congregations, following more or less the example of that of South Place Chapel, have latterly reached a position scarcely distinguishable from that of the Ethical Societies.

At times, Unitarianism has seemed to be carrying all before it in the name of Christianity: at other times it has seemed to be dissolving into non-Biblical pantheism or rationalism. In New England the former progression appeared to be triumphant in the first four decades of the century,[1] till the Bibliolatrous and dogmatic bases of the cult were assailed by Parker, driving the younger spirits to broader grounds, on which the Bibliolaters were loth to go. Later, in Britain, the pressures of science and Biblical criticism led some of the younger Unitarian preachers, influenced by Martineau, to renounce alike miracles and Messianism, inspiration and revelation; and we find the rhapsodes at work explaining that the real values of the Bible have been saved by "destructive" criticism; that the books become newly interesting when shown to be supposititious; and that a Jesus reduced to the status of a Teacher is far more precious than he had latterly been as a miracle-working Saviour, sacrificed to expiate the sins of men.[2]

But while such adaptations appealed strongly for a time to the more enlightened adherents of the sect, they could not interpenetrate it without partly dissolving it. There were always serious and influential Unitarian opponents to the new tendencies; and the outcome of the debate was that about 1880 Unitarian doctrine could be said to range "from a semi-orthodox Socinianism to the confines of the religion of humanity according to the gospel of Comte."[3] It was chiefly the philosophic prestige of Martineau that latterly gave distinction to the Unitarian name, about which Martineau was unenthusiastic.

In the end, the practical matter becomes one of endowments for churches and salaries for preachers, in the Unitarian fold as in the nominally Trinitarian, which is now so largely Unitarian in real opinion. Anglicans, such as the Rev. Stopford Brooke, previously distinguished as a literary critic and historian, and ex-Catholics, such as the Rev. R. R. Suffield,[4] turned to the Unitarian connection for religious sympathy on what they felt to be rational bases. While there are congregations seeking such ministry, the Unitarian body has as good a prospect of survival as any outside the State Church, albeit on a relatively small scale, in respect of its special appeal to intelligence. But there is now no more prospect of its becoming a popular rival to the Catholic Church than of such a development for any of the "new

[1] De Tocqueville (cit. by Goblet d'Alviella, p. 221) predicted a general monotheistic religion as natural to democracy.

[2] E.g. the sermon of the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, cited by Goblet d'Alviella, p. 89.

[3] *Id.* p. 89.

[4] See the citation from his sermon, 1881, by Goblet d'Alviella, p. 99 *sq.*

religions" of the past half century, though the state of mind expressed by that facile formula appears still to be common enough.

No "new religion" has had anything like the material success of Mormonism, which (from 1830) has always lived on the lowest intellectual plane, combining Bibliolatry of the crudest kind with "new revelation" and auto-suggestion no less crude, but very successfully employing the economic factor, and for a long period enforcing polygamy. Its religious ethic has further enjoined, at will, murder and even massacre, the latter, apparently, as a result of the brutal persecution originally directed against Mormonism by the spirit of Christian orthodoxy. Claiming to be ultra-Christian and ultra-Biblical, it has yielded much more slowly than orthodoxy to the solvents of criticism; and it has long continued to recruit its adherents from illiterate Europe.[1] Its chief rival in the United States may be said to be "Christian Science," which is non-localized. The possibilities of "new religion" thus appear to be much larger for uncritical and credulous than for intellectual movements.

[1] The history of Mormonism has latterly been written critically and temperately by Stuart Martin, *The Mystery of Mormonism*, 1920, and M. R. Werner, *Brigham Young*, 1925. Other works still circulate myths, pro and con, on "The Book of Mormon." As to Mormon social ethics and success, cp. *The Rise of American Civilization*, by Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, 1927, i, 623–7.