

by good and necessary consequence deduced from it, is to be believed and taught ; but this gives no countenance to the way in which the sacred writers are often put upon the rack, to extort from their reluctant lips some testimony to a foregone conclusion.

None of these reasons, nor all combined, will bear careful examination, or supply any valid ground for the rejection of a well-compacted Scriptural Theology. They are rather among the influences which we may feel, than among the reasons which we can formulate or defend.

There are, however, objections to Systematic Theology, and to all fixed religious convictions, which, if equally unfounded, are not always so easily dissipated.

There is a philosophy abroad which knows not God, and which, consequently, can find no place for what man is to believe concerning God, or the duty which God requires of man. I do not refer to that metaphysical philosophy which, as its highest achievement, sends us to worship at the altar of an unknown God. Its high priests do not regard it as Atheistic in its tendency. It has even been employed so to define the limits of religious thought as to cast a designed rampart around revealed religion. It is true, Christianity has never taken kindly to its defender, but of this philosophy we do not speak.

We refer rather to those systems, Atheistic and Pantheistic, which deny that there is a personal God, or assert that there is no evidence of his existence. These views manifestly render impossible the acceptance of any supernatural revelation, or any definite doctrinal system founded upon it.

These anti-theistic philosophies have largely tainted the atmosphere of modern literature, and many who avowedly reject them, are unconsciously led, by their indirect influence, to assume a semi-hostile attitude towards all theological systems.

Even James Anthony Froude has not escaped the infection. In his "Short Studies on Great Subjects," he has a paper on "The Prospects of Protestantism." These, as painted by him, are gloomy enough. Mistaking a change in the manifestation of life, for a loss of vitality, he sees in Protestantism, everywhere, the