

to refrain from its criticisms. By-and-by it began these again, but it found me in a new condition. The cause of this further change was simple, and extremely common.

“At the time to which I now refer I was only a younger son, and the divine object of my affections ended by prudently disappointing them. She had, however, reinvigorated the element of transcendental faith in me; and just as her favours had seemed to me a spiritual sacrament, so her defection affected me like a spiritual tragedy. The difference between goodness and badness seemed more appalling to me than ever. When, therefore, my reason renewed its exact demonstrations that nothing was important in this life of disappearing experiences, and that the joys and sorrows of love were on a level with those of digestion, I set myself anew to examine and combat these arguments, whose premises seemed so true, and whose conclusions so false, to fact. I again studied the question of the credibility of dogmatic Christianity. At the same time I directed my attention anew to a feature of the situation which had struck me from the very first—that the very philosophers and men of science who were foremost in enunciating the conviction that science was inconsistent with Christianity, and indeed with any form of religion, were foremost also in declaring that some substitute for religion was a necessity; and I set myself to consider what their proposed substitutes were. I wrote a book in which I analysed each of them; and I showed that each was as illogical, as full of superstition, as inconsistent with the facts of science, and, considered scientifically, as ridiculous, as any of the dogmas and doctrines whose place it was designed to take. The major premise on which I tried to take my stand was this: Human life cannot be wholly devoid of meaning. There must be some permanent difference between right and wrong. If then, I proceeded to argue, there is any theory which explains and alone suffices to explain this difference, it must be true. Theistic religion does explain it completely; every proposed alternative to theistic religion is absurd; therefore the