

“Religion without God” and “God without Religion” (9) are telling titles which aptly describe the two chief currents of thought which influence those who reject the revelation in the written Word. The work entitled *Religion without God*, shows that Herbert Spencer’s gospel, “Unascertained Something,” which in process may be evolved, and that Mr. Harrison’s gospel, “Spiritual Power,” which man unfortunately by nature has not, are no substitutes for religion, either as to the life to come, or even to the life that now is. The companion book, *God without Religion*, considers Sir James Stephen’s case for Deism, which means a total abandonment of all religion,—an abandonment, however, admitting of a belief in God. In a most business-like and painstaking manner William Arthur deals with his opponent. He first of all clears the ground by showing what is the precise attitude of Sir J. Stephen to Agnosticism, Positivism, and Christianity. This is necessary, for though the Judge, from his legal training, is less ambiguous than Mr. Spencer and Mr. Harrison, yet he uses some ambiguous phrases to cover the weakness of his position and to hide his own perplexities. If Sir J. Stephen is less ambiguous than his non-Christian contemporaries, he treats his subject with a lightness beyond all parallel, consequently William Arthur, as a skilled controversialist, exposes the folly of this Deist. But to make Sir J. Stephen’s discomfiture the more complete, his arguments are taken seriatim, and may be summed up as follows:—Men do not want a religion, they only take it through compulsion; men can get on very well without a religion; men are moral without a religion; besides, virtues will not be destroyed, but only transferred by the abolition of religion; and even certain poetic virtues are not exclusively Christian,—for example, patriotism. As the argument, that men do not really want a religion, is based upon the hypothesis that the scientific view of life destroys the foundation of religion, William Arthur brings the full force of his Christian artillery against this citadel of his opponent, not ceasing to fire until he has completed its entire destruction. Chapters v. and vi. are worth careful reading and re-reading. William Arthur now returns to the discussion about the absurdity of the very idea of doing away with religion, and especially with Christianity, and about the social and moral deterioration which would eventually result from any such attempt.

(9) *God without Religion, Deism, and Sir James Stephen*. By William Arthur. Bemrose & Sons. Price 7s. 6d.