

credulous enough to believe what was told them without seeking to understand the whys and wherefores for themselves. And, as we do not accept without question the views of our predecessors, neither will the coming generation accept ours. Bishop Hall says: "God hath given to man a busy soul, the agitation whereof cannot but, through time and experience, work out many hidden truths; to suppress this would be no other than injurious to mankind, whose minds, like unto so many candles, should be kindled by each other." But very often, while groping in the darkness, we believe ourselves to have found light when it does not exist. There are thousands of alluring theories which lead us on, tempting us with plausible arguments backed up by apparently indisputable statements, until, in the perplexity, we lose hold of firm ground and find ourselves utterly and hopelessly at sea. Thousands have been wrecked on the hidden rocks of "spiritualism," "fatalism," etc. "A slight knowledge of philosophy often inclineth a man to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds to religion." There are, however, fewer atheists than skeptics, for even if it were possible to behold the manifestation of intelligence in creation and doubt the existence of a Creator, we cannot deny the existence of God without destroying man's nobility. If we be not akin to God in spirit, how know we that we are more than a higher species of animal? Having no destination, we are mere waifs in creation. Even could solid arguments of much higher kind than has ever been adduced for Darwinism be presented, all noble nature would revolt against it. With regard to the religious phase of the question, the shallowness and inconsistencies of many professed Christians is the one of the chief foundations of modern skepticism. One may be wavering between two opinions, undecided whether to accept or reject Christianity. Hypocrisy in a professed Christian naturally causes a revulsion of feeling, and we are led to doubt, not only the sincerity of all Christians, but the very existence of Christianity, silencing the accusations of conscience by recalling these inconsistencies. "An atheist is but a mad derider of piety, but a hypocrite makes a sober jest of God and religion."

We cannot pierce the thick clouds lying between us and futurity. The deepest researches have failed to throw further light on the great problem of life and death, or upon the being and character of the Almighty and our relation to Him. It is an endless repetition of St. Paul's saying: "The world by wisdom knew not God." What, then, is practical religion? Is it not to receive the Kingdom of God as a little child? There are those of firm mind and large intellect, of wide research and profound knowledge, who, acting thus, have come to a light, which to them has been clear and satisfying, of the truths of the Bible. They could as soon doubt any of the accepted revelations of science as of this revelation within them. They *know* whereof they speak; and it is not two or three here and there, but it is a great company of those whom no one has ever dared to call insincere or weak who bear this testimony. No one can disprove it. He may reason away a hundred interpretations that have been given to passages in the Bible, but no criticism that has ever been applied can touch this argument. The attempt is vain, as the search has hitherto proved for the principle of life. No analysis of the soul, however subtle, can contradict our consciousness. The idealist in philosophy never acted upon his principles. Whatever man may have reasoned himself into, his consciousness, like an Ithuriel spear, can put to flight the whole paraphernalia of doubt that touches his actual position and relations in life. Because we have awakened to see that a great many of our fancies about nature were foolish, and our decisions narrow, shall we discredit everything that has been received upon whatever authority? That surely would be weakness; and, since no testimony can be brought to overturn that of the honest Christian, these searchers after truth, if they would "prove all things," are bound to put themselves in an attitude of complete receptivity before they reject the most important of all conclusions, namely: the truth of revelation.

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Value the friendship of him who stands by you in the storm; swarms of insects will surround you in the sunshine.