

but of occupied time. The time-intervals, then, which have presented themselves to our contemplation in dealing with the past and future of our earth, being in their nature finite, however vast, are less than the shortest instant in comparison with absolute time, which—endless itself—is measured by endless cycles of change. And in like manner, the space seemingly infinite from which our solar system has drawn its materials—in other words, the universe as partially revealed to us in the study of the star-depths—is but the merest point by comparison with absolute space. The end, seemingly so remote, to which our earth is tending, the end infinitely more remote to which the solar system is tending, the end of our galaxy, the end of systems of such galaxies as ours—all these endings (each one of which presents itself in turn to our conceptions as the end of the universe itself) are but the beginnings of eras comparable with themselves, even as the beginnings to which we severally trace back the history of our planet, of the planetary system, and of galaxies of such systems, are but the endings of prior conditions which have followed each other in infinite succession. The wave of life which is now passing over our earth is

but a ripple in the sea of life within the solar system; this sea of life is itself but a wavelet on the ocean of eternal life throughout the universe. Inconceivable, doubtless, are these infinities of time and space, of matter, of motion, and of life. Inconceivable that the whole universe can be for all time the scene of the operation of infinite personal power, omnipresent, all-knowing. Utterly incomprehensible how Infinite Purpose can be associated with endless material evolution. But it is no new thought, no modern discovery, that we are thus utterly powerless to conceive or comprehend the idea of an Infinite Being, Almighty, All-knowing, Omnipresent, and Eternal, of whose inscrutable purpose the material universe is the unexplained manifestation. Science is in presence of the old, old mystery; the old questions are asked of her—"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" And science answers these questions, as they were answered of old—"As touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out."

R. A. PROCTOR.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

THE anonymous work on "Supernatural Religion" appears to have attracted more attention than any rationalistic treatise since the appearance of Dr. Strauss's celebrated "Leben Jesu," with the single exception of Ernest Renan's, which was, however, a romance rather than a treatise, or even a biography. The work, though published in two volumes at a high price, has passed through several editions. Its authorship is one of our contemporary enigmas. It was at first attributed to the learned and venerable Dr. Connop Thirlwall, formerly Bishop of St. David's, then to Dr. Muir, author of "Ancient Sanscrit Texts," then to the Unitarian, Dr. Vance Smith, and now to Mr. Pusey, nephew of Dr. Pusey; but in the cases of Dr. Thirlwall and Dr. Smith, the con-

jecture was met by a prompt denial. In the *Contemporary Review* lately come to hand, Professor Lightfoot, a scholar of the highest reputation, contributes a first article on this work, upon which he makes a trenchant and, we had almost said, a savage attack. Any attempt to follow the Professor's philological criticism, which, from the nature of the case, is verbal and technical in its character, would be obviously impracticable within our narrow limits. It must suffice, therefore, to indicate briefly that criticism and the main points contended for by the writer. Quoting from five or six periodicals in which the anonymous author is eulogized as an acute scholar, a scientifically trained critic, &c., Professor Lightfoot ironically suggests that the "Supernatural