

and heathenism, in about equal proportions. Probably there is not one person in this assemblage who would for a moment believe in the supernatural origin of any religion at all, if he rejected Christianity as such. The only point I wish to show clearly is, that if we affirm the Gospel is untrue, we cut up by the roots all supernatural religion, and affirm that we are without a voice from God.

2. We come, in the next place, to systems of philosophy. They are contradictory, and without the possibility of positive proof. A man thinks out a system of philosophy, and it is clear to him. He adopts it. The evidence of its truth to him depends upon the faith which he reposes in the premises which he employs, the confidence he has in the correctness of his reasoning, and in the conclusions which he draws. But another man, studying his system of philosophy, departs from him in several essential particulars, and is as well persuaded that he is wrong in these particulars as the former is that he is right. Hence it has come to pass that very rarely in the history of the world has the disciple of any philosopher agreed with him all the way through, or even in substance. Of course this is a proposition that can be disputed, but I only suggest one or two points to show that it is true.

According to the best ancient history we have, Socrates was the teacher of Plato; but Plato differed from Socrates in a great variety of modes. And what was the relation of Aristotle to Plato? But, not to go back to those ancient periods—what is the condition of affairs to-day in the world of philosophy? I have a friend who has been reading nothing but philosophy for twenty years. He has not read a book upon any other subject in all that time; and, so far as I know, and so far as he knows, there has not been a book on philosophy published that he has not purchased and read. Now he testifies to me, that he has not in all his library, embracing the publications of the last thirty years, two works on philosophy

which substantially agree. There are works that agree in many points, but they differ in others, and differ fundamentally. It is perfectly clear that no two systems of philosophy agree substantially. But, upon the assumption that they do, how can they be authenticated beyond the power of the human mind to test the matter in the present state? Can a system of philosophy span the river that separates us from the future state? Is it possible for a system of philosophy, without instruction from God, to interpret properly the plans of God, involving the whole course of human life and the final adjustments of eternity? And there will be nothing supernatural in it. Now, let us look at it for a moment upon the basis of Nature. Walking in Fulton Street one day, I met a gentleman of considerable learning, who has no sympathy with any branch of the Christian Church. I asked him to prove to me the being of a God from Nature. After a little effort, he gave it up—as every man must who has no other proof than the deductions he undertakes to draw from what he sees around him. He cannot prove it if anybody doubts it. Then I asked him, upon the assumption that there is a God, to prove that He is good. Well, he fell into a beautiful passage about the starry heavens and about the beautiful flowers that spring up, and turned on me and said, that any man who could doubt the goodness of God, when he was surrounded by beauty and wisdom on every side, was an unwise man. I was obliged to ask him to explain the pestilence, the famine, the earthquake, the law of death, the law of hereditary insanity and idiocy, and all the evils that affect mankind. I asked him if he would explain how it was that in the order of nature, or of God, the great majority of the human race, from the creation of man down to this age, have suffered under the terrible curses of ignorance, poverty, and disease. He could not explain it; and when I asked him if the dark things of nature, without an explanation, did not as really