

THEOLOGY AND MORALITY, by N. Prower, B.A., Oxon. (Montreal : Gazette Printing Company.)

This is an able argument on an important and deeply interesting subject. Mr. Mallock on the one side and Mr. Frederic Harrison and Miss Bevington on the other have been discussing whether or no it is possible to have a permanent and an elevated morality apart from the belief in a Deity and the hope of a life to come. It is to this controversy that Mr. Prower addresses himself, and he does so with much wealth of illustration and with no little argumentative force. Mr. Prower holds that religion is essential to morality, if morality is to be a permanent and growing possession of the human race. He proves his position first by a careful historical statement. The drift of this is to show that the decline of religion has always been followed, after an interval, by a corresponding loss of morality, even when the impulse derived from the expiring faith has, for a time, preserved the sanctity of morals apparently unimpaired. The argument then becomes more abstract and tends to demonstrate the necessary connection between the loss of faith and the decline of morals. It is handled in a way that shows a great mastery of the subject, and an adequate degree of special reading. No one can read the paper without much instruction, or if he is interested in such inquiries without keen pleasure.

It is not possible here to give even an outline of the course of thought. But we desire to call the special attention of our readers to this able discussion. Whatever opinions they may ultimately form on the main question at issue, it cannot, we think, be denied that here lies in great degree the final battle ground of the contest between faith and unbelief. Men are certainly moral beings, and if the moral nature of man involve references to a supreme being and to a spiritual world, as a long succession of thinkers from Plato to Kant has maintained, these faiths can never perish from the race, can at the utmost suffer only a temporary eclipse. Let our readers study and judge for themselves. One thing at all events Mr. Prower makes clear, that the questions of God and a future life are not without what the French call "actuality." On the contrary they penetrate to the very bases of the whole practical life, so that the view a man adopts will colour all he thinks, and influence everything he does. We heartily commend Mr. Prower's paper as a valuable contribution to the discussion of a great subject.

J. F. S.