

RELIGION VERSUS SCIENCE.

BY THE EDITOR OF THE "MAIL AND EMPIRE."

LET us ask, first of all, what is religion? Herein etymology will render us no assistance, for the word, as such, originally referred only to human devices for the maintenance of what we understand by the word religion, not to the thing itself. The purest-hearted layman existing in mediaeval times might properly have been described as "not religious," and so, for instance, Chaucer uses the word meaning "not affiliated to any religious order." Perhaps a definite understanding of the term may be arrived at if it be conceded that religion is equivalent to the "Knowledge of God." This at least has been the aim of every system, and the message of every supposed revelation. Our own Scriptures have, as their fundamental object, the revealing of the nature of God, on which, and on which alone, our worship must needs be based. Can science help us here? We throw not. If we believe in God at all, can we doubt that God is almighty? The idea that He is not so is the end of all faith and the beginning of superstition. It is irrational and worse, and probably no enlightened human being would dare to propound it in set terms, mother though it has been of many of our irreligious follies. Must He not also be all-wise? It is self-evident that he must be so, for almighty power wielded in ignorance or incompetency, would have no resemblance to the settled order we observe, and could only maintain itself by an endless succession of miracles. Finally, is not God as perfect in benevolence as in power and wisdom? Is it not clear, to state the matter in the simplest terms, that "God is love?"

The history of the world, whether revealed by geology or recorded by man, the very existence and supremacy of the human race, and the fact that our intellectual powers permit of such a thing as science, conclusively prove it. Indeed, if it were not so we should be only losing our time in the discussion of religion. There are few who believe there is no God! If there be a God at all, such He must be.

It is easy to see what has prompted the speculations so rife in our time. The conditions have been favorable to their growth. Science has made great progress, and men have begun to talk as though there were no limit to its progress. But the limitations of science are exceedingly real. Where she has removed a veil it has been only to show more impenetrable darkness beyond. We use electricity as our everyday servant. Has science told us what electricity is? We have discovered that life in its beginnings takes form in one simple protoplasm which knows no distinction, whether the result be microbe or elephant, ape or sage—it is alike for all. But the discovery has not advanced us one jot towards