

Law in the Spiritual World,"—from which we quote—reference was made some time ago in your columns. Prof. Drummond says:—

"Science cannot overthrow faith, but it shakes it. Its own doctrines, grounded in nature, are so certain, that the truths of religion, *resting to most men on authority, are felt to be strangely insecure*. The difficulty, therefore, which men of science feel about religion is real and inevitable, and in so far as doubt is a conscientious tribute to the inviolability of nature, it is entitled to respect."

The sentence we have italicized puts the difficulty in a nutshell. The theologian, when asked why he believes certain things to be so, replies: "Because the Bible says so," or, "Because the Church says so." The scientist, when asked why he believes certain things to be so, replies by giving actual demonstration of the verity of what he holds to be true. To the ordinary mind the scientist would appear to have the stronger claim to credence. Certainly the theologian should have less cause for objecting to the onward march of science than almost anyone else. The theologian believes that God inspired the Bible and that He made the world of nature. Then, surely He would not have made His written record stultify His created work? If the testimony of the inspired book did not bear out what Mr. Hugh Miller has very beautifully called the "Testimony of the Rocks," or, in other words, Nature, then He could not have been the author of both. One or other must be a forgery. But the theologian admits God to have been the author of the Bible and of Nature. Then, why should objection be raised to the fullest and most searching investigation of one or the other. If both are from the same hand, then they will not belie one another. Misinterpretations of both may possibly—nay, do occur; inferences may be drawn wrongly or illogically. And that is where the real difficulty arises. As Prof. Drummond very truthfully says:—

"Science is tired of reconciliations between two things which never should have been contrasted; religion is offended by the patronage of an ally which it professes not to need; and the critics have rightly discovered that, in most cases where science is either pitted against religion or fused with it, there is some fatal misconception to begin with as to the scope and province of either."

The position of the scientist may be fairly drawn from the following remarks made by Professor Huxley in his essay on "Animal Automatism," where he draws the logical conclusion that human beings are automata largely and that our free will has been greatly curtailed by the law of heredity. Speaking of the logical conclusions of this theory, Prof. Huxley says:—

"So that if the view I have taken did really and logically lead to fatalism, materialism, and atheism, I should profess myself a fatalist, materialist, and atheist; and I should look upon those who, while they believed in my honesty of purpose and intellectual competency, should raise a hue and cry against me, as people who by their own admission preferred lying to truth, and whose opinions therefore were unworthy of the smallest attention. But, as I have endeavoured to explain on other occasions, I really have no claim to rank myself among fatalists, materialists, or atheistic philosophers. Not among fatalists, for I take the conception of necessity to have a logical and not a physical foundation; not among materialists, for I am utterly incapable of conceiving the existence of matter if there is no mind in which to picture that existence; not among atheists, for the problem of the ultimate cause of existence is one which seems to me to be hopelessly out of reach of my poor powers. Of all the senseless babble I have had occasion to read, the demonstrations of those philosophers who undertake to tell us all about the nature of God would be the worst if they were not surpassed by the still greater absurdities of the philosophers who try to prove that there is no God."

Again, with fine irony, Prof. Huxley says: "There are so few interesting questions which one is, at present, allowed to think out scientifically—to go as far as reason leads, and stay where evidence comes to an end—without speedily being deafened by the tattoo of 'the drum ecclesiastic.'"

Speaking of those who stretch and twist and distort every statement made by scientists, and then shriek about the atheistic and materialistic tendency of modern science, he says:

"Logical consequences are the scarecrows of fools, and the beacons of wise men. The only question which any wise man can ask himself, and which any honest man will ask himself, is whether a doctrine is true or false. Consequences will take care of themselves; at most their importance can only justify us in testing with extra care the reasoning process from which they result."

One more quotation from Mr. Huxley will suffice. Its aptness, truthfulness and peculiar force will furnish ample excuse for insertion in this article:

"Seeing how large a share of this clamour (about logical conclusions) is raised by the clergy of one denomination or another, may I say . . . that it really would be well if ecclesiastical persons would reflect that ordination, whatever deep-seated graces it may confer, has never been

observed to be followed by any visible increase in the learning or logic of its subject. Making a man a bishop, or entrusting him with the office of ministering to even the largest Presbyterian congregations, or setting him up to lecture to a church congress, really does not in the smallest degree augment such title to respect as his opinions may intrinsically possess. And, when such a man presumes on an authority conferred upon him for other purposes, to sit in judgment upon matters his incompetence to deal with which is patent, it is permissible to ignore his sacerdotal pretensions, and to tell him, as one would tell a mere common, unconsecrated layman, that it is not necessary for any man to occupy himself with problems of this kind unless he so choose; life is filled full enough by the performance of its ordinary and obvious duties. But that, if a man elect to become a judge of these grave questions; still more, if he assume the responsibility of attaching praise or blame to his fellow-men for the conclusions at which they arrive touching them, he will commit a sin more grievous than most breaches of the Decalogue, unless he avoid a lazy reliance upon the information that is gathered by prejudice and filtered through passion, unless he go back to the prime sources of knowledge—the facts of nature, and the thoughts of those wise men who for generations past have been her best interpreters."

Strong language, surely! Stinging rebuke and keen sarcasm, truly! But we really do not wonder at such an earnest seeker after truth, such a noble master-mind as Mr. Huxley, being goaded into writing such an indignant and well-merited rebuke to young fledglings in Divinity, who think because they have received ordination they have received eternal and unassailable wisdom and knowledge.

In this connection it may be well to listen to what a clergyman says. Rev. W. H. Dallinger, LL.D., F.R.S., F.L.S., a scientist of more than local repute, said in his Montreal address:

"It is our highest vocation as Christians—from the very nature of Christian morality—to seek truth and to receive it, *come from whence, and lead to where it may*. . . . If in a search for some visible and rational basis for the most ennobling beliefs of our lives, we can make congruous and fair deductions from the very deepest truths of science, it becomes our most elevated duty to do so. The Theologian, as such, forfeits all right to the ear of science, when he dares to usurp dominion over its facts, its deductions, or even its hypotheses."

And again, Dr. Dallinger is courageous enough to affirm the following:

"I speak from no cursory knowledge when I say, that foremost amongst the noblest truth-seekers on this earth, are the leaders in the work and thought of science to-day. And can there be any nobler work? Is it not better to follow truth, though it lead to the grave of our hopes, than to be cushioned with lustful indolence upon the Delilah-lap of falsehood?" This coincides exactly with Mr. Huxley's position. But it must be borne in mind that Dr. Dallinger is not one of those clergymen of whom we wish more directly to speak. He is a thoroughly informed, capable, and liberal-minded man. It may be well to remember that he is President of Wesley College, Sheffield, England.

Those clergymen to whom we wish to refer more fully, are well represented by a Dr. Wainwright, the author of a volume called "Scientific Sophisms"—published by Funk and Wagnalls in their "Standard Library" series. This book is filled with nothing but smart and captious objections; attempted, but very feeble, witticisms; sarcastic, and very often illogical, deductions. It is altogether unworthy of attention by those who desire to discuss scientific questions in a reasonable and sympathetic spirit. It smacks of the dabbler in science, who, finding its truths either too subtle for comprehension, or too startling for belief, thereupon instantly denounces them as untrue and illogical. Facts, the investigation and substantiation of which cost Mr. Darwin forty long years, are dismissed with an airy wave of the hand by our fledgling curate as unworthy of even a passing notice. Such expressions as: "All I feel justified in affirming is," "I see no reason for believing," "I should expect to witness," "I can imagine," "I am led to believe," "the weight of evidence would warrant me in believing," and like phrases, act as a red rag to Dr. Wainwright and those of his school of thinking. Suggested as they were by the extreme modesty of such men as Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, they should be accepted in the spirit in which they were uttered, and not, as they almost always are, as feeble and unworthy excuses for positive assertions. When scientists are dogmatic, they are called impudent, arrogant and defiant. When they are modest and deferential, they are abused for lack of courage, lack of candour, and want of confidence in their own opinions, and all other kinds of iniquities. In fact, there is very little hope of the scientist ever satisfying his theological critic. Of course it must not be supposed that the scientist is never guilty of any offence. If he is, we may rest pretty well assured that it is only in retaliation. But I do say that in the great majority of cases the scientist is not the bigot, not the sneering fault-finder, not the iconoclastic critic, but the patient investigator, and the earnest, conscientious seeker after Truth.

ALTIORA.