

history, and all discovery. We recal the story in one of the Greek writers of the man who in order to save his bees a troublesome flight to Hymettus cut their wings and placed before them the finest flowers he could select. But the wingless bees made no honey. They needed the flight. In like manner the Church has often sought to do with men. She has cut their wings with the kindly but foolish idea of saving them from the dangerous flight into the fields of thought. But a clipped or pinioned faith will make no honey: it will droop and die. Ours is essentially an age of thought. Science has made it essentially an age of inquiry, and whatever the danger attendant upon inquiry may be, we cannot, and, as Protestants, we dare not, stop it, even when it directs its queries and investigations into all that is most sacred in our creed. Even the Bible itself, alike for its facts and its doctrines, must be subjected to the crucible. We are living in a new world, where knowledge runs to and fro in the Earth, unlocking secret doors that have long been sealed, and disclosing and deciphering a handwriting of God that has been long unread, and it is the vainest of delusions to think that we can meet these, that we can stop the current of thought which they have started, or lay to rest the uneasiness of belief they have produced, by an ominous and forbidding shake of the head. It is the weakest and most foolish of expedients, with an angry denunciation to refuse to listen to the messages which they profess to bring, because these messages seem to refuse to harmonize with our inherited views and received traditions. We are forced to ask the question—How do the foundations of our faith stand in the light and truth that God is pouring in upon us from every quarter? We are gathering today the fruits, the inevitable fruits, of the great Reformation movement. It was not in the realm of religion alone that the Reformation made a revolution; it did so even more in the world of science, and the religious scepticism which followed the Reformation had its root not nearly so much in a new order of faith as in a new order of science. There was a new apprehension of nature; there was a new conception of the material universe; and from this has sprung the restlessness of belief so conspicuous today. It is science that has shaken the old creeds, and begotten that spirit of inquiry into everything religious which we designate, and I think designate wrongly, by such a title as "Current Unbelief." Moral unbelief there has been in every age, and there is much of it today. The unbelief that has its seat in the heart and not in the head; the unbelief that is due not to what the Bible asks men to believe, but what it asks them to be and to do, and gladly do such unbelievers turn to anything which they fancy will prove a rational foundation for their attitude, or serve as an excuse for their immorality. If science can prove the Bible to be a collection of fables, and the religion built on it a superstition, they imagine they will be more at ease in their godless, selfish, sinful life, and be relieved from the sting which conscience and the Church have hitherto put into their