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NATURAL RELIGION.*

"LORD GIFFORD'S BEQUEST" provides certain lectureships for the discussion of "Natural Theology." It declares that "the lecturers shall be subjected to no test of any kind . . . they may be of any religion or way of thinking, or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion, or they may be so-called sceptics or agnostics or freethinkers," but they must be "able, reverent men, true thinkers, sincere lovers of, and earnest inquirers after, truth." The testator further directs, "I wish the lecturers to treat their subject as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences, indeed, in one sense, the only science, that of Infinite Being, without reference to or reliance upon any supposed exceptional and so-called miraculous revelation. I wish it considered just as astronomy or chemistry is." It is not surprising that Professor Max Müller waxes jubilant over this bequest, and points to it as a gratifying indication of the approaching triumph of the newest of the sciences, "the Science of Religion." And certainly he is faithful to his reading of the conditions. He distinctly and formally warns "supposed exceptional and so-called miraculous revelation" off the ground. He does not deny the abstract possibility of supernatural revelation; but he does not treat it as a factor to be reckoned with practically.

Of course, there is an obvious defence of this procedure.

* *Natural Religion*. The Gifford Lectures delivered before the University of Glasgow in 1888. By F. Max Müller, K.M. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1889.